

# IN ENEMY COUNTRY



JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

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# INDIAN STORIES

By

*James Willard Schultz*

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JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ, or Ap-i-kun-i, — to give him his Indian name, — went West in the '70's, joined a tribe of Blackfeet, and for years lived, hunted, and fought side by side with them. From these experiences he has drawn material for his books, which have been called 'the best of their kind ever written.'

**In Enemy Country**

**Red Crow's Brother**

**A Son of the Navahos**

**William Jackson, Indian Scout**

**Questers of the Desert**

**Bird Woman**

**Plumed Snake Medicine**

**Sahtaki and I**

**The Danger Trail**

**The Gold Cache**

**Apauk, Caller of Buffalo**

**With the Indians in the Rockies**

**Sinopah, the Indian Boy**

**The Quest of the Fish-Dog Skin**

**On the Warpath**

**Lone Bull's Mistake**

**Running Eagle, the Warrior Girl**

**Rising Wolf, the White Blackfoot**

**In the Great Apache Forest**

**The Dreadful River Cave**

**The War-Trail Fort**

**Seizer of Eagles**

**The Trail of the Spanish Horse**

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JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ











## **In Enemy Country**









I SNATCHED THE BRIDLE ROPE . . . AND URGED THE  
HORSE ONWARD (*page 188*)



# IN ENEMY COUNTRY

BY  
JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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Drawn by Rodney Thomson





# IN ENEMY COUNTRY



## CHAPTER I

### THE RED GOWN

**AUTHOR'S NOTE.** Aponis'tai (White Calf) is the oldest living member of the Blackfeet tribe of Indians. I first met him when, in the autumn of 1880, he came south with his people to live upon the buffalo herds which still covered the great plain between the Missouri and the Yellowstone Rivers. At that time he was about thirty years of age, and one of the most noted warriors and hunters of his tribe. Before the evening fires in his lodge, we feasted upon the broiled buffalo tongues and fat ribs that his women set before us, and then, while we smoked in turn his big long-stemmed pipe, he told me many a tale of his adventures. One of them particularly interested me, but with the passing years it all but escaped my mind. Then, last summer, when visiting the Blackfeet upon their reservation at Gleichen, Alberta, I again was a guest in his lodge, and he retold in all its details the tale which had so much interested me in the long-ago.

'It is a worth-while story. I shall write it,' I said to him.

'Ai! Do so. Do not fail to do so, that in the years to come, when we of the old buffalo days have all passed away, our children, learned in the ways of the

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white men, may read and understand how their fathers lived when, from the Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone, the country was theirs — all theirs.'

So here it is, the old man's story, as nearly in his own words as it is possible to translate it.

MY winters were not many when I realized that my father, Many Swans, had very peculiar ways. He was not a sociable man; he rarely visited in other lodges of our great camp, and seldom invited men, not even those of our own clan, to feast and smoke with him. He was a medicine man, owner of the sacred buffalo medicine, the symbol of which was painted, life-size, upon our lodge: on the right side, a buffalo bull; upon the left, a buffalo cow; both of them in black, with a red life-line running from mouth to red heart. My father often went to war against the Crees, Assiniboines, Crows, and Sioux, always alone, and never failed to return with scalps and horses and weapons that he took from the enemy. He was so successful in this that other warriors often asked to be allowed to follow him upon his raids; and always he replied that his sacred medicine forbade his granting their requests. By his raids and by natural increase, our horse herd



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would have numbered several hundred head had he been less generous; as it was, he gave away to his own and to my mother's relatives the greater number of enemy horses that he captured, reserving for us only the fastest and most powerful, well-trained buffalo runners.

My mother, Lone Woman, was very beautiful of face and of slender and active body. Her hair, done into two heavy braids, hung almost to the ground. Although she was, of course, a medicine woman, helper of my father in his buffalo medicine ceremonies, and always one of the sacred women who built, every summer, the great lodge for Sun, she was at the same time of very happy disposition. She loved company, song, jokes, and laughter; and often reproached my father for his aloofness from it all. Always he would reply: 'I am as I am. When I am away, fill our lodge with your friends; feast and chatter with them. While I am here with you, help me to live in the quietness that enables me to think about the gods and understand their ways.'

Always, when my father went upon his lone war trail, my grandmother came to live with my mother and me; she was my mother's mother.

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My other grandmother was dead. It is one of Sun's laws, that he gave us in the long-ago, that forbids men meeting their mothers-in-law or even seeing them. So it was that, upon returning from war, my father would always stop at the outer edge of camp and get some one to come to us and announce his arrival; my grandmother would then quickly gather up her belongings and, with wrap concealing her face, hurry across the circle to her own lodge. Then, when my father came in, he would always ask about her health and name certain horses that he had taken for my mother to give to her. And he would add: 'Tell her, too, that I have great respect for her; for her kindness of heart; for her upright life. Ask her to pray for me.'

'She does pray for you; constantly prays for long life and happiness for us all. She is very proud that she is your mother-in-law,' my mother would reply.

When I was six, maybe seven, winters old, I began helping my father take care of his fine band of horses, and when he was away, I helped the man whom he left in charge of them. Always, when night was near, we brought the band in to camp, and, roping the most valuable of the ani-

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mals, tethered them close around our lodge, where they would be fairly safe from enemy war parties. Then, in the morning, we would turn them loose to go out and graze with the others of our band; a little later, after our morning meal, we would round them all up and drive them to water, and out where the grazing was good, then leave them to wander about as they would during the day. Horses are clannish: the members of one band do not mix with those of other bands; therefore it is no great task for a person to take care of his band; he recognizes it from far by the color of the animals and their number. In my father's band were many pinto horses — black-and-white-spotted, brown-and-white-spotted, yellow-and-white-spotted; very beautiful animals they were.

During my twelfth winter our tribe camped and hunted on Bow River, close up to the great mountains, and then, in the New Grass moon of spring, we moved out east and south to the Divided Hills,<sup>1</sup> where not only buffalo, but all

<sup>1</sup> Aiahkimikwi (Divided Hills): the Cypress Hills, east and south of Lethbridge, Alberta. This was a particularly favorite hunting-ground of the Blackfeet tribes, and their ally, the Gros Ventres, for there they not only obtained buffalo meat, the staff of life, but also the skins of the deer kind for buckskin clothing.

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other kinds of food animals — elk, moose, deer, and antelope — were very plentiful. One morning, soon after we arrived there, my father awoke me, told me to dress and go with him to round up our horses.

Day had not yet come. I was still sleepy: 'Why go so early?' I asked.

'Because I am uneasy about our animals. I feel drawn to go to them,' he replied.

We went down the valley, and, as we neared the edge of the plain, day came. From the top of a little ridge we saw our band; many of them lying down, the others, heads low, asleep upon their feet. They were distant from us about the length of two long bow-shots, and for half of that distance the ridge slope was well timbered, with a scattering undergrowth of willows. As we stood looking at the animals, we saw one and another of them raise their heads and stare intently at a point at the edge of the timber ahead of us and well to our right. Several of them stamped the ground with their forefeet, and snorted, and at that the others that were lying down sprang up and also stared at the place.

My father drew his bow from its case, strung it,



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drew out three or four arrows, and whispered to me that something was wrong out there. I closely followed him as he noiselessly, cautiously went on. And then, when we were almost to the edge of the timber, we saw two men, straight in front of us, leave it and slowly walk toward the band, each with a coiled and noosed rope in his hands; each wore a single eagle tail-feather stuck up at the back of his head. My father quickly made the three or four steps out to the edge of the timber and let fly an arrow at one of them; it struck him fairly between his shoulders, and with a loud cry he flung up his hands, staggered, and fell.

The other man looked back and saw us, dropped his rope, and ran swiftly to regain the shelter of the timber off to our right. My father fired an arrow at him and it struck into his right shoulder; he yelled with the pain of it, but kept on running. My father fitted another arrow to his bow, and, as he was about to let it fly, lo! the bowstring broke.

So was it that the man got safely into the timber and we were powerless to pursue him. Anyhow, as my father said, it would be death

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to us to undertake pursuit in there, for he would conceal himself and shoot us as we approached him.

So we ran out to the other man, who was quite dead, and my father took his weapons and shield and tapped the body with his own bow, thereby counting another *coup*. And then, rounding up our horses, we each caught and mounted one of them and quickly herded the band in to camp. There my father called out for help in hunting down the man who had escaped him. Several hundred joined him in the search, while others hurried to round up their bands of horses. All day long the search for the wounded enemy was kept up, but no trace of him was ever found. Some declared that he must have crept into a patch of very thick brush and there died, but my father maintained that the man had somehow cunningly escaped their search; he was merely wounded in the fleshy part of his shoulder.

There was some talk about the identity of the two men; by the eagle tail-feathers that they wore at the back of their heads, they were either Crows or Sioux. None could be sure to which one of the tribes they belonged. For a long time after that

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morning, my father scolded himself for not carrying always an extra bowstring. 'And through my own carelessness in not throwing away that string, when I knew that it was badly frayed, I failed to count *coup* upon that fleeing enemy. I shall never again see him,' he often remarked.

Sun priest that he was, favored by the gods with visions of what the future held for us, it is very strange that my father got no hint that we were to see that enemy again.

Passed my sixteenth winter, and, in the first moon of summer, we all moved to the trading post on Bow River, to exchange our winter take of furs for the white men's goods. In our lodge were one hundred skins of beavers that my father and I had trapped, that my mother had carefully fleched of all grease, and perfectly dried in willow frames. We were rich in furs, and my mother urged my father to exchange forty of the hides for a gun, and powder and ball and flints. He refused to do it. 'My vision is against it. I was warned, as you know, to use only bow and arrows for my weapons,' he replied. 'Myself, I want of the traders' goods only sufficient tobacco to last until summer comes again. So,

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my woman, buy that for me, and then, for yourself and our son and your good mother, buy what you will.'

At that, my mother took his hand and stroked it softly, and said to him: 'Generous man! Too good, too generous to us! And always so silent, so sad. Oh, why can't you be like other men, happy of heart, generous to yourself? With these many hides of beaver, buy things for yourself; pretty, useless things that the white men sell. I should love to see you wearing blankets, every day one of different color. I should like you to use white men's paints; a far-seeing instrument; and, regardless of that long-ago vision of yours, a gun.'

So was it that my mother and I loaded the beaver skins upon three horses, and led them to the trading post, my grandmother accompanying us. Arriving there, we carried the packs of skins into the trade room, seated ourselves upon them, and, looking at the various articles displayed upon the shelves behind the long, high counter, considered which ones of them we would own.

Said my mother: 'First of all, we buy tobacco to the amount of ten skins.'

'No. Twenty skins for tobacco; you must be



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sure to get enough of it to last your man's use until next trading time,' my grandmother said.

'Yes,' my mother agreed.

They then whispered to one another. I heard them mention a gun. Were they going to buy one for my father, against his certain word that he would not have it?

We heard a commotion outside: men shouting, horses neighing, dogs barking. My mother was afraid that our horses had got into some kind of trouble; she told me to go out and remain with them. I did not want to go. I wanted to see her trade in our skins. But my grandmother said to me: 'You heard your mother. Do not hesitate. Go!' Then I went out. Our horses were as we had left them. Two, near them, had become tangled in their ropes and were plunging about and kicking one another. I helped their owners free and quiet them.

After a time my mother came to the gate of the trading post and called to me. I followed her into the trade room and she pointed to a little heap of things upon the floor; blankets, tobacco, red cloth and blue cloth, and, on top, a gun, can of powder, and sack of balls. 'It is yours, the gun;

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yours, the food for it. Take them,' she told me.

I was so surprised that I could not speak. I trembled. My grandmother looked at me and laughed. The trader white men, behind their high counter, also looked at me and smiled. I took up the weapon and its belongings, the women took up the other purchases, and we went out and mounted our horses and rode home, my grandmother to her lodge, my mother and I to our lodge. We entered it, and my mother placed before my father the things that she had bought for him: the plentiful supply of tobacco, three blankets, a large knife.

He saw the gun in my hands, and said to her, frowning: 'I told you that I would not have a gun!'

'Nor shall you have one; that is your son's gun,' she replied.

He smiled. 'Good! I am glad that you bought it for him. But what did you buy for yourself and what for your mother?'

'For her, two blankets, red cloth and blue cloth for two gowns, and a package of red paint.'

'But for yourself?'

'Nothing.'

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‘Never, never was there a woman so good, so generous as you are!’ he exclaimed. And, gathering up the blankets, he placed them at her end of their couch, and added: ‘They are yours, all yours. I refuse to wear even one of them.’ And at that my mother cried a little, but happily.

Then, when I had saddled two good horses, my father and I rode north out upon the plain, and he taught me to load and aim and shoot my gun, and gave me much praise when I sneaked up to a band of antelope and killed one of them. And more than once, as we went homeward with the meat and hide, he said that I must never forget my mother’s goodness in giving me the gun; that I must always do all that I could to make her happy.

It was on the following evening, as I remember it, that he said to my mother: ‘Your mother, I suppose, has made herself gowns with the red cloth and blue cloth that you bought for her?’

‘She has made one, of the red cloth, and is now ornamenting it with rows of elk teeth,’ she answered.

‘Ah! It will be a beautiful gown. How I should like to see her wearing it!’

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‘Why, you shameless man! Wanting to see your mother-in-law ——’

‘Of course I didn’t mean that. I only meant that a red cloth gown with rows of elk teeth must be very beautiful,’ he quickly replied.

However, he seemed to have the gown upon his mind, for during the next few days he often spoke of it, asking how many rows of elk teeth were to be strung upon it, and if there were to be rows upon the sleeves.

‘Why, you funny, funny man! Why are you so interested in the making of a woman’s gown?’ my mother would exclaim. ‘Well, if you must know, each sleeve has four rows of teeth.’

At last, one evening, she said that the gown was completely made and that my grandmother was wearing it.

‘Ah!’ my father exclaimed; he stared long at our little lodge fire, and then, wrapping himself in his cow leather toga, went out into the night.

My mother replenished the fire; we talked for a time; again she replenished the fire, so that the lodge would be bright and cheerful when my father returned. But he did not come, and, so

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sleepy that we could no longer sit waiting for him, we went to bed.

At daybreak my mother came across to my couch and awakened me, crying: 'Your father has not returned! I am terribly worried. We must try to learn where he is, whether some one may know where he went, and for what reason.'

I hurried into my clothes and was tying my moccasins, when my father came in, and, without a word to us, crossed the lodge and seated himself upon his couch. He looked very sad; his hair, always neatly braided, was in disorder. He made no reply when my mother told him that we had been terribly worried over his all-night absence, and asked where he had gone. She hurriedly built a fire, set before him a bowl of water, and then began preparing our morning meal. As one in a dream he stared at the bowl of water; after a time he washed his face and hands, and combed his hair. Then again he sat staring at the fire with sad and worried eyes.

Said my mother to him, when he refused the dish of meat that she had nicely broiled: 'Many Swans! Oh, my man! Why are you so sad, so worried?'



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'I have done a great wrong! Don't ask me what it is! I am terribly, terribly ashamed of myself,' he replied, and would say no more.

Then, when Sun was well up into the blue, he took up his bow-and-arrows case and a rope, and said that he was going to round up our horses and drive them to water. When I made ready to accompany him, he told me to remain with my mother, and said he would likely be out all day.

After a time my mother and I went out to the edge of camp, and from there, we saw him drive our band to water. Turning them back to graze, he rode up to the north rim of the valley, dismounted, and sat down upon the ground; and though we could not see his face, we knew that he was still worrying about what he had done in the night.

Time and time again, during the day, the while we watched him sitting lone up there, my mother said to me: 'Your father is a real man. He would never wrong any one. I am sure that he is worrying himself sick over something that is of no account whatever.'

He remained up there on the rim, without food, without water, until Sun was low above the

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mountains, and then, descending, he drove in our fast buffalo runners and I helped him stake them around our lodge. He was still sad and silent, but he ate a little meat, drank some water, and filled and smoked a pipe.

Finally he said to us: 'My woman, my son, this evening, pack up carefully all of our belongings, for to-morrow we leave this camp.'

'Why do we that? Where do we go?' my mother asked.

'I do not care to explain. I simply say that to-morrow we leave this camp,' he replied shortly.

He was so sad, so short with us, so strange, that we dared not further question him. My mother got out her many parfleches, and I helped her to fill them with our many things of use.

In the morning, when I brought in our horses and we began saddling and packing them, the people gathered around and asked where we were going, why we were leaving camp. My mother and I could not answer their questions, and my father would only say to them: 'We are going off south for a time. I have my reason for it.'

'But it will be too dangerous. The plains are

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alive with enemy war parties,' Chief Three Bears cried.

'I have a powerful protector: my buffalo medicine,' he replied.

I overheard men saying to one another that my father was a man of one mind; that it was ever useless to argue with him, useless to try to turn him from anything upon which he had set his heart.

My mother had taken time to cross the great camp circle and tell my grandmother of our going. As we got into our saddles and started out with our many packed and many free-backed horses, we could hear her crying bitterly over our departure. My father took the lead, telling us to herd the band along after him as fast as possible. We soon climbed the south slope of the valley, and struck off straight south across the great plain, my mother and I very sad of heart, fearful of what might be ahead of us. We traveled steadily all through the long day and well into the night, and came to rest on the banks of High River, where, from the foot of the great mountains, it issues out upon the plain. We did not set up our lodge; we picketed a few of our best horses,

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hobbled some others, and, spreading our bedding, lay down and slept.

We were up the next morning before Sun appeared, and, while my mother built a fire and prepared our early meal, my father and I cared for our horses and bathed in the cold river.

He was more cheerful than he had been for many a day, so, while we were eating, my mother said to him: 'Many Swans, whither are we going?'

'Nowhere, to-day. Here we rest until night, and then pack up and go on south, to avoid any war parties of enemy tribes that may be traveling along the foot of the mountains.'

'But that doesn't answer my question,' she went on. 'I ask you where in the south we are going: are you taking us to one of our brother tribes, the Pikuni, or the Bloods, or our friend tribe, the Big Bellies, camping here and there on Big River, or some of the streams running into it? No doubt at this time one or another of them will be trading their winter catch of furs at the Big Knives' Many Houses Fort, on Big River.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Big Bellies are the Gros Ventre tribe of Indians. The Big Knives were the American Fur Company. Many Houses was its Fort Benton post, on the Missouri.

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As a black cloud suddenly hides Sun from us and darkens the earth, so did my mother's question change the expression of my father's face. His somewhat cheerful manner vanished. Frowning and sad-eyed, he stared long at our little fire, and at last he replied: 'We go not to a camp of our brother tribes. We go where I shall not be constantly reminded of the shameful thing that I have done. Woman, we are going to live with the Crows.'

At that, my mother shrank back as though she had been struck, and I shivered as though chilled by a winter wind. Then she cried: 'The Crows! Of all enemy tribes, the worst! You mean that you are taking us to be killed by them!'

'No. They will not kill us. My sacred buffalo medicine will protect us: of that, I had assurance in my vision last night. I saw winter snow gone, except for a few drifts, and new grass sprouting in places of damp earth. So is it that, when I awoke, I knew that I was to see the coming of another summer, and decided that we would go to live with the Crows.'

'But your vision is no assurance that your



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woman and your son will live to see another summer,' said my mother, very sadly.

'My future is also the future of you two. And now, let me hear no more about it. *We are going to live with the Crows!*' he replied shortly.

To my mother and me that was a day of terrible unrest. We felt certain that my father was taking us south to be killed by our bitterest enemies. Time and time again we asked each other what it was, the shameful thing that he had done, that he must take us from all that we loved; from the peace and safety of our great camp to the constant dangers upon the long south trail. Heavy, very heavy were our hearts when, at dusk, we saddled and packed our horses and went on.

## CHAPTER II

### A DANGEROUS TRAIL

NIGHT LIGHT soon appeared, shining so brightly that the night was almost as light as the day. During the winter our people had not hunted so far south as High River, so we here found the country alive with herds of buffalo, antelope too, and so tame that they fled but a little way when we approached them. All through the night, as we followed the south trail across the foot of the great mountains, we were constantly in sight of the herds, and when, at daybreak, we halted upon the top of a high ridge, for a good look at the country ahead, my father said that never in all his life had he seen so many and such large herds of the animals as were then about us. And everywhere they were quietly grazing or resting, and that eased our minds, for it was a good sign that the country was free from enemy war parties.

After a short rest upon the ridge-top, we remounted our horses and went on, and, when Sun was about halfway up to the middle of the blue, we arrived at Old Man's River, and halted in a

## A Dangerous Trail

grove of cottonwoods. As we were taking the loads off our pack-horses, we heard, just below us, the approaching rush of many animals, and ran to the edge of the grove to learn what might be the cause of it. A large herd of buffalo were coming in to water, and the younger animals were so thirsty that they had taken the lead and were running across the bottom and plunging into the river, leaving the older ones and cows with calves to string on slowly after them. My mother urged that we kill one of the animals, and, after some thought, my father told me to do what I could with my gun. Upon hands and knees I crept out from the grove, well hidden in the sagebrush, and made careful aim at a cow of two years that had drunk and come back from the river to graze. Whoom! My bullet pierced her lungs, and she made two or three jumps and fell; the herd, frightened by my shot, ran off down the valley. At that, we hurried back into the grove and finished unpacking and caring for our horses, and then returned to butcher my kill and take the tongue and liver and choicest parts of the meat. I was so pleased with my success with my gun, and my mother was so proud of my sureness

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of aim, that we forgot, for the time, the terrible danger into which my father was leading us. She sang little songs as she broiled the tongue and slices of the liver for us, and was quite talkative while we ate the good food.

Said my father, when we had finished eating: 'Just above here, as you know, is the place where, in the long-ago, Old Man gambled.<sup>1</sup> There, just as he left them, are the huge round stones that he and Red Old Man rolled, when they there played so fiercely one against the other. Well, that is a very sacred place, so I am going there to pray, to sleep, and perhaps to obtain a revealing vision for our guidance. Fear not, you two, for you are safe enough here. Sleep well, and if you awake before I return, cook more food, eat, and patiently await my coming.'

We made no reply to that, neither my mother nor I. Sadly enough we watched him take up his sacred medicine bundle, his bow-and-arrows case, and leave us. Heavier than ever, our fears were

<sup>1</sup> Napi (Old Man) was the principal god of the Blackfeet tribes until they obtained, from more southern tribes, the religion of the Sun. He was believed to have created the world and all life upon it, and then to have gone West, after promising the people to return to them at some future time.

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back within us; more than ever we longed to be back in the great camp of our people. My mother bade me sit beside her; she put her arms around me and cried.

I became angry. 'It is not right that we are here, night after night going farther from our people, on and on south into enemy country. Now, while we have the chance, let us each saddle a horse and take our back trail as fast as we can go!' I said.

Wide-eyed, my mother straightened up and stared at me. 'Though I knew for sure that he was leading me to my death, I would not leave my man!' she cried. 'And you, his son, you whom he dearly loves, — for all his silences and his strangeness, — how can you propose that we desert him? Think, now! Were I to agree to this that you propose, would you really and right now strike out upon our back trail?'

'No, I would not. I was angry; I did not really mean what I said. Wherever he goes, we must go with him. But oh, it is hard! His ways are so strange! What can it be, the terrible thing that he has done, that has so shamed him that he cannot live with our people?'



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‘Ah! Would that I knew! None has spoken against him. I am sure that he only imagines that he has done some wrong thing,’ she replied.

‘Well, why not ask him about it? Maybe you can talk him into turning back ——’

‘You know as well as I do that one may not question a Sun priest. One can only learn that which he chooses to tell about his reason for doing things,’ she replied.

We were very tired from our long ride. We ceased talking, lay down side by side, and slept.

I was aroused by my mother; she was whispering in my ear: ‘Awake. Don’t move. Just look.’

I was lying upon my left side; she was at my back, her head resting upon my shoulder, her arm around me, holding me fast. I opened my eyes as I heard another sound, a loud snuffling and sucking-like smacking of lips. Haiya! Not twenty steps from us a large real bear <sup>1</sup> was eating the meat that we had brought in from my kill; eating it greedily, piece after piece. It suddenly raised its head and growled; another real bear was approaching, a bear of immense size; of body as large as that of a buffalo cow. It came steadily

<sup>1</sup> Nitapokaiyo (real bear), the grizzly bear.

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on, the great body swaying, the heavy furred hide shaking at every step. I could feel the beat of my mother's heart, fast, faster, and faster. My own heart seemed to be beating in my throat: I was as frightened as she was of these terrible animals that often attacked people at sight of them, that had so strong hold of life that they would fight on and on long after receiving wounds that would almost at once have killed a buffalo, or one of the deer kind. I knew, too, that, instead of springing up and running away, our one chance to escape their anger was to remain just as we were, perfectly still. It was hard, very hard to do that, when our bodies were aching to be up and going.

The first bear suddenly let out a thunder-like roar and made one short stiff spring toward the other one, but it gave no answering roar, just kept coming steadily on, and the first bear backed up to the meat, took a large piece in its mouth, and ran off with it. With head high, sniffing the air with its wriggling and wet black nose, the other came straight to the remaining piece of the meat, quickly ate it, and, seeing that there was no more, went trotting off upon the trail of the

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other bear and out of our sight. They had gone down the grove. We sprang to our feet and my mother said that they would return, that we must go. We ran the other way, out of the grove, and up onto the rim of the valley. Looking back from there, we saw the larger of the two bears feasting upon my kill; the other, at a little distance, sitting upon its haunches and awaiting its turn at the meat. Big bear did not intend that smaller bear should have any of it. Having eaten until he could hold no more, he lay down beside the remains of the carcass, to guard it. And at that, smaller bear turned and went back into the grove.

The day was now nearly gone. We watched eagerly for sight of my father and talked of our escape from the bears. We had picketed none of our horses, and they were resting quietly at the edge of the river, above the grove from which we had fled. I proposed that we go up to my father, at Old Man's gambling place, but my mother would not agree to it; he must not be disturbed, she said. Sun was near setting when we saw him coming down the valley. We ran and met him, quickly told him of our adventure with the bears.

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‘Well, you were not hurt by them, all is well with you, and I have had a good vision in my sleep, up at that sacred place. So, now, we will drive our horses into the grove, pack up, and go on,’ he said.

‘But we can’t do that: one of the bears is in the grove, the other just outside it, lying beside our son’s kill,’ my mother objected.

‘They have eaten so much that they do not want to do anything but sleep, and as the wind is down the valley, our horses will not get scent of them. Come, let us pack up and be on our way before night is upon us,’ he replied, and we could but obey him.

He proved to be right; we saw nothing of the bears as we saddled and packed the horses, but my mother and I did not draw free breath until we were across the river and riding up the south slope of the valley.

On the following morning, soon after Sun appeared, we made camp on Rope-across-it Creek<sup>1</sup> and close to the foot of the mountains. Here, too, herds of buffalo and of antelope were everywhere in sight, and, as soon as we had unpacked our

<sup>1</sup> Lee’s Creek.

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horses, I proposed that I should procure our morning meal with my gun. But no. My father said that I must keep my powder and balls for time of great need; and that we must use bow and arrows to procure our food. His order hurt me; better than all else I loved the roar of my gun, the quickly following thud of the ball as it struck the animal of my aim, the suddenness of the animal's fall. Yes, with my gun I felt that I was almost as powerful as is Thunder Bird with his terrible bolts of fire. I spoke my thought; my father smiled.

‘Why do you laugh?’ I asked.

‘If that is the way you feel, why didn't you protect your mother by shooting the real bears?’ he countered.

‘Well, you know that even guns are not quick, sure killers of those powerful and mad-hearted animals,’ my mother told him.

‘I did not shoot at them because I feared that we might meet our end as Red Plume did, last summer: dead and mangled we found him, beside his empty gun, and near by and also dead the real bear that he had shot fair in the heart,’ I said.

‘In that you did exactly right; I was but jok-



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ing,' said my father, very solemnly. 'Bears, real bears, are the one kind of animals that are more powerful than we who walk upon two feet. They can also do that; their bodies, save for their heads, are almost exactly like ours; they are our relatives, yes, relatives who hate us. Avoid them, my son, whenever it is possible to do so. Well, we need meat. I will furnish it. Gather wood, you two, for the cooking fire.'

At that, he caught one of our swiftest horses and, mounting and crossing the stream, approached a small band of buffalo that were coming in to water. They saw him and turned and fled back the way that they had come, but, before they reached the foot of the slope up to the plain, he was right among them, and let fly an arrow deep into the side of a two-winters cow. We saw it fall, saw him dismount beside it. By the time we had a fire burned down to a heap of hot red broiling coals, he was back to us with the tongue and other choice parts of the fat animal. We soon satisfied our hunger, and, in the shelter of the grove in which we had unpacked our animals, we lay down and slept until late in the day.

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Our next stop was on Little River,<sup>1</sup> the most northern of the streams flowing from the great mountains east and south into the South Big River. From there we went to Birch Creek; then to Milk River;<sup>2</sup> and from there, traveling all night and well into the day, we made camp on Big River<sup>3</sup> itself, where Point-of-Rocks River<sup>4</sup> joins it, and but a little way above the upper one of the Big River falls.

Here we found the recently abandoned camping-place of a tribe of our people, undoubtedly the Pikuni; hundreds of lodge sites, the ashes in the fireplaces still light and fluffy; cast-off wearing apparel strewn around them; old moccasins, their tops with quill embroideries that were surely of Pikuni designs. We saw, too, that upon leaving the place the people had taken the down-the-river trail; without doubt had gone to the Many Houses Fort of the Big Knives, there to trade their winter catch of furs.

As we sat around our little fire, eating the good fat meat that we had broiled, I saw that my father was in cheerful mood, and that my mo-

<sup>1</sup> Milk River.

<sup>2</sup> Teton River.

<sup>3</sup> Missouri River.

<sup>4</sup> Sun River. .

## A Dangerous Trail

ther, sad of face, was watching him; was wanting, and at the same time dreading, to speak of something that was in her mind.

At last she said to him: 'Many Swans, it is but a ride of one day down to the Big Knives' Fort and to our Pikuni friends and relatives there trading. Do let us go to them, camp with them, if only for a few nights.'

'Oh, yes! Yes, father, let us do that,' I put in, but even as I spoke I knew that our plea was to be denied; for he was again sober-faced, frowning, staring at the fire.

'You two, why did you ask that of me?' he said, after long thought. 'My mind was at peace, but now you have brought back to me unpleasant remembrance of the shameful thing that I did from which I seek escape. To do as you ask, to camp with our brother tribe, would cause my shame to be ever in my mind by day, in my sleep at night. No, I cannot turn from this southward trail. We must follow it until we arrive at the camp of the Crows.'

'Oh, my man! By the love that you have for our son, for me, tell us, now, what it was, that shameful thing that you did,' my mother pleaded.

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For a long time he considered that, and finally answered: 'You shall know about it, later on.'

My mother bowed her head; tears streamed down her cheeks. She said no more. I was just as unhappy as she was; but what could we do about it? Nothing.

We rested in the grove at the mouth of Point-of-Rocks River, and near set of Sun packed up, and, crossing the wide ford of Big River a little way above its upper falls, continued upon the great trail, running now in a southeasterly direction, so as to avoid the Belt Mountains. The night passed without incident, and soon after daylight we made camp in that deep-down gash in the plain, the walled valley of Arrow River. But we had no more than relieved the pack-horses of their loads when my mother, going to the stream for water, found tracks of men upon the shore and motioned us to join her. They were quite fresh tracks; imprints of feet encased in soft-soled moccasins. So was it that we knew that they who had passed there were enemies, for we Blackfeet and our brother tribes wore only moccasins with rawhide soles.

Said my father, after looking carefully up and

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down the narrow valley and at the cliffs upon its either side: 'With enemies so near, this is no place for us to camp. Come, we must repack our horses as quickly as possible and go out upon the plain.'

We ran to the animals, hurriedly saddled them and fastened on their loads, mounted, and went on. The trail into the valley had been down a long, winding, and narrow coulee, and it went up a like coulee upon the south side; it was the one crossing of the walled valley for a long way to the east and to the west. As we crossed the river, and approached the mouth of the south side coulee, three men appeared upon the top of the south cliff, to the west of us, quite a long way to the west, and, by their shouts and their signals and pointings of their arms towards us, we knew that they were the scouts of the enemy war party, undoubtedly resting by the stream, and that they were urging them to hurry down the valley and attack us. We heard the answering shouts of the party, but, owing to the several groves of timber above us, could not see them. Then, before we arrived at the coulee, we saw the scouts turn from the cliff and run out to head us off. My father



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shouted to my mother and me: 'It is the end for us if those scouts reach this narrow coulee before we can pass from it out upon the plain! Urge the horses on, follow me as fast as you can make them go!'

At once we began lashing the horses with the ends of our ropes, crowding against them, shouting to them, and soon got them on the run, going fast as we entered the narrow coulee. For quite a long way the trail was right in the bottom of it, and there we easily kept them going at full speed; but then, suddenly, the trail quartered up the right side of the coulee, to avoid the cross-wise ledges in it, and was so narrow that but one animal at a time could pass along it; and there, upon either side of the coulee, was a line of cut cliffs that prevented turning the band up and out upon the plain. So was it that my mother and I could not keep the animals from slowing to a trot, and then to a walk along the narrow path. My father kept looking back at us, signing us to hurry, although he well knew that we were powerless to make the band trail on faster. And we, in turn, kept looking back, expecting to see the war party fast gaining upon us. We at last did discover

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them, twenty and more men, coming on the run.

Just then the trail dipped back into the bottom of the coulee, and widened; and again we were enabled to lash and crowd the animals, first to a trot and then to a swift run. On and on we went and we lost sight of our pursuers. We were now nearly up to the level of the plain; we could see where the cliff walls of the coulee merged into the green grass slopes of its head. But there, at the end of the right cliff, suddenly came the three scouts of the enemy, and, with arrow-fitted bows, stood ready to shoot when we should pass under it. They danced; sang; signed to us to come on. They were sure that, with their party close following us, they would soon have our scalps, our band of horses, and the packs that some of them carried. So thought my mother and I. Yes, now was come the end for us. Then, suddenly, my father pointed up to our right, shouted that I was to follow him, that my mother was to keep the band of horses going upon the trail. I saw that, where my father pointed, there was a break in the cliff, very narrow, very steep, but still passable. I followed him up into it, up through it onto

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the level of the plain, and then we rode straight at the three scouts, there upon the end of the cliff. My father's horse was much more swift than mine. He quirted the animal until he had it going at its utmost speed and left me well behind. He rode straight at the three, awaiting him with ready bows. They let fly their arrows at him, and he shot one at them. The middle man went down, and down went my father's horse, but he himself landed upon his feet, and almost instantly put an arrow fair in the breast of a second man, and at that, the third and last of them turned and headed for that break in the cliff up which we had come, with the intention, of course, of joining his party, coming fast up the trail. My father shot several arrows at him, but failed to make a hit, and could not run after him, as he had injured his ankle when he sprang from his falling horse.

I was terribly afraid that the man would get down into the coulee in time to intercept my mother and kill her, for, alone, she could not make much progress with our band of horses, hungry after their long night journey and eager to stop and graze. I dared not shoot at the man



DOWN WENT MY FATHER'S HORSE





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from the saddle; the motion of my horse would make my aim uncertain. So it was that I checked the animal, sprang to the ground, and, kneeling, and with careful aim, pulled trigger. Whoom! I heard the ball thud into the man, and dimly through the powder smoke saw him throw up his hands and stagger, and fall. And at that I felt as I never had before in all my life: I shivered, and yet felt hot. I was both glad and sorry that I had taken a human life. I started to go to the fallen one, count *coup* upon him, take his weapons, but my father shouted to me to hurry to him. I mounted my horse and went and helped him to mount behind me, and just then we saw our band of horses going from the head of the coulee out upon the plain and heard my mother shouting to us for help. She came up in sight, lashing the stragglers, affrightedly looking back, and we knew that the enemy were coming fast upon her trail, were almost upon her. We joined her just in time, for they were within long bowshot; they did let fly some arrows at us, but none took effect. As we urged our band on to faster speed, my father raised the victory song of our people and I joined in. When the enemy gave up the chase, as

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they soon did, and turned back to their dead, I caught a fresh horse for my father. We were now very tired and sleepy, but went on until, from the high points that we topped, we made sure that we were not being followed. Sun was long past the middle when we at last made camp on Wolf Creek, a little stream flowing south and east into Yellow River.<sup>1</sup> My father was very happy over our success in killing three of the enemy; Crees, he said they were — he had plainly seen their faces, tattooed with streaks of blue. And by this time I had become proud of my share in the fight: of course it was right that I should kill one who had attempted to kill us.

But my mother, as she broiled some meat for us, was not smiling; she said to my father: 'Almost I died from fright after you two left me to drive on our horses, and I saw those many enemies fast overtaking me as I herded the hungry animals up the trail.'

'But we killed three of them. You survive. Be happy,' he replied.

'There can be no happiness for me upon this dangerous trail. If we are not killed somewhere

<sup>1</sup> Judith River

## A Dangerous Trail

along it, I am sure that the Crows will wipe us out when we enter their country ——’

‘Woman, take courage. Believe in me. I know what I am doing. The Crows, enemies of our tribes though they are, are going to be friendly to us three,’ my father interrupted.

‘As well say that real bears will be friendly to us!’ she exclaimed, and would say no more. And at that, all my fears returned. I believed with her that our end was near.

## CHAPTER III

### A WOLF JOINS THE PARTY

DURING the remainder of the day we slept by turns, and by turns sat upon the rim of the little valley and watched for the Cree war party to appear upon our trail. They did not appear; doubtless they thought it useless to attempt to overtake us. At dusk we packed up and went on south. In the middle of the night we crossed Yellow River,<sup>1</sup> ascended the pass in the Yellow Mountains,<sup>2</sup> and in the first light of morning made camp in a grove of pines upon their southern slope, and hurriedly cooked and ate some meat. From the edge of the grove, in the full light of day, we could plainly see, well out upon the plain, the dark gash of South Bear River,<sup>3</sup> flowing east and north to lose itself in Big River. And beyond it, far off and dim against the blue, we made out a dark rise that my father said was the Bighorn Range of mountains, in the country of the Crows.

<sup>1</sup> Judith River.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Mountains.

<sup>3</sup> Musselshell River.

## A Wolf Joins the Party

He had more than once traversed the foot of them when upon raids against that tribe. And now he was taking my mother and me to those very people; to the relatives of men whom he had killed. Again my mother wept and begged him, before it was too late, to turn about and head for Many Houses Fort and safety with our brother tribe there encamped.

To that he shortly replied: 'We go on! Again I tell you that we shall be as safe with the Crows as we are with our own people!'

He then told my mother and me to sleep while he herded our horses, to keep them from straying out from the grove to the open grassy slope, where they would surely be seen by any passing war party. Within the grove there was plenty of grass and pea vines for the animals.

Later in the day, when Sun was well past the middle of the blue, my mother and I took the watch and my father slept. The horses, filled almost to bursting with the rich grass and vines, were all lying down and sleeping, and so required no herding. So was it that we two went to the lower edge of the grove, and, sitting in the cool shade of the trees, looked out upon the great



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southern plain and rimming mountains that had once been Crow country, but was now lost to them. Our far-back fathers, brave men of the Siksika, the Kaina, the Pikuni, and our friends the Utsena had wrested it from them by many a hard-fought battle, and at last driven them to the south side of Elk River.<sup>1</sup> Was it any wonder, then, that they hated us, this tribe to which my father was taking us? said my mother.

‘When he awakes, again ask him to turn about and take us to our own people,’ I said.

‘As well ask the wind to change its course, the rivers to turn and flow up their valleys!’ she replied.

Sad though we were, terribly low of heart, we could not help feeling proud that it was ours, this great country that our fathers had taken from the Crows. It was black-and-yellow with countless herds of buffalo and bands of antelope. Upon the mountain slope below us and at either side were everywhere deer and elk, resting, grazing, traveling about, singly and in little bands. We were in need of meat, and I proposed that I procure some with my gun. My mother would not

<sup>1</sup> Yellowstone River.

## A Wolf Joins the Party

allow it. I was to save my powder and balls for a time of great need, as my father had ordered, she said. So was it that I strung my bow and fitted an arrow to it. Soon three elk came grazing along, and, as they were passing close in front of us, I shot and killed one of them, a one-winter cow, quite fat. Silently, without happiness in the work, we partly skinned the animal and took some of the meat. How could we be happy when constantly fearful of that which was ahead of us, somewhere there at the foot of those dim, far-south mountains, their tops now red in the light of setting Sun? Gathering bark from cottonwood trees around a little spring, we built a smokeless fire, cooked some of the meat, and called my father to eat with us. He came, singing one of his sacred songs, ate plenty of the meat, and praised me for procuring it with bow and arrow. My mother and I had nothing to say.

After looking again and again at our sad faces, he said to us: 'I do wish that you would cast out the fear that is in your hearts: three or four nights from now, you are going to be very happy.'

'Kyaiyo! He says that we are going to be happy!' exclaimed my mother.

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My father winced, but made no reply.

We saddled up, lashed the loads upon our pack-animals, and went down the mountain and out upon the great plain. In the middle of the night we crossed South Bear River, and at dawn came to rest on the shore of a small lake that was the watering-place of immense numbers of the animals of the plain. All day long, and from all directions, they approached it, and those of them that got scent of us turned suddenly around and fled. That made us very uneasy — my mother and me — for well we knew that any chance war party, near or far, would come to learn the reason for their flight from the lake: except in the mating season, buffalo and antelope were always slow in their movements when free from the presence of their great enemy, man. My father noted our fear, and smiled. 'Rest; sleep well. I had a good vision during my last sleep. I assure you that no enemy is near,' he told us.

He did sleep during the first half of the day, and when he awoke and took the watch, we were so tired that we could not help but sleep. We awoke just before set of Sun, ate some meat that we had broiled back in the mountains, and again

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went on. The night was cloudy, but without rain. My mother and I had to work hard to keep our band of animals going at the fast pace that my father set from the time that we left the lake. Again and again he shouted back to us never to let them slow down to a walk, for we must make camp in a grove of Elk River before break of day. Now and then we were obliged to stop to relash a slipping pack, and he became very impatient over the delay. And at last, when the lashings of a pack broke and it fell and we had to hunt about in the grass for the different things that were scattered in it, he scolded us for not having fastened it on with a stronger rope.

‘But why be so uneasy when you are sure that the Crows will receive us with friendly greetings? Why, then, are you so anxious to arrive at the border of their country in the night and hide in a grove?’ my mother asked.

‘I have my reason for it,’ he replied shortly.

He worried, too, about the cloudiness of the night; unable to see the stars or certain buttes of the plain, he feared that he would not be able to strike Elk River at the point where he intended to cross it, close above the mouth of Bighorn River.

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Morning came when we were still out upon the plain, but dark as the night had been, he had held his course, for close ahead of us we could see the breaks of both rivers. Arriving at the rim of the valley of the greater river, we stopped and looked up and down it and across at the valley of the smaller one: in neither of them was smoke of lodge fires; nowhere were horses in sight; in the green grass bottoms and along the valley slopes, as far as we could see, buffalo, antelope, elk, and deer were peacefully resting or grazing. Between us and a big grove opposite the mouth of the Big-horn was a large herd of buffalo. My father looked at them a long time, and at last said to us, 'We will not disturb them; we will take no chances that we can avoid.' And with that he led back out upon the plain and to the west, and then down into the valley, where were no animals for us to frighten, other than a few deer. And so, very tired from our long and hard night ride, we came to rest in a fine large grove of cottonwoods and willows bordering Elk River; quickly we built a smokeless fire of bark, and cooked and ate plenty of the meat of the elk that I had killed back on the slope of the Yellow Mountains. My



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father then took the watch, and my mother and I lay down and slept.

Sun was well past the middle of the blue when my father awoke us, and told us to take our turn on watch and to be sure to awaken him when Sun was still quite a little way above the mountains. Our horses, we found, were resting and grazing in the center of the grove and required no herding, so we went to the outer edge of the grove and sat down.

Out in the bottom, between us and the valley slope, a few old buffalo bulls were grazing, and farther down, opposite the mouth of the Bighorn, was a large herd of cows and calves that we had avoided frightening in the early morning; it was peaceful enough where we were, but more than ever my mother was low of heart.

'To-night we cross the river, enter Crow country. Oh, my son, my son! Across there, I fear, is the end of us,' she said to me.

'It will be no easy task to cross this big river; maybe we shall meet our end in it,' I said.

'Yes, maybe so. Well, better that than to be killed by the Crows,' she replied.

And then we were for a long time silent.

## In Enemy Country

The strange actions of a wolf turned us from our sad thoughts. He was crossing the open, grassy bottom to enter the timber below us. The wind was blowing down the valley, and we watched to see the animal suddenly turn and run for the plain upon getting scent of us. But no! He stopped short when he learned of our nearness, sniffed the wind again and again, and then, wagging his tail and grinning, came trotting straight up, and at a distance of about ten steps, wagged his tail much faster, grinned more than ever, advanced and retreated again and again, as though saying to us: 'I want to be friendly with you, but am afraid.'

I stood up and called: 'Wolf, pretty wolf, come here.'

I extended my hand, and at that he came nearer, grinning more than ever, but drew back when I was about to stroke his head. Again I spoke kindly to him, and when I advanced he did not retreat. Gently I stroked his broad head, and then he licked my hand, and, rising, put his paws upon my shoulders and licked my face. I patted him, stroked him farther down, and found that he had a collar around his neck; a soft buckskin

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collar embroidered with colored porcupine quills. We examined the design of the work; it was one that we had never before seen. My mother was frightened: 'The owner of this tame wolf is doubtless not far from here,' she said.

I sat down. The wolf circled around, smelling of clumps of brush, trunks of trees, and then lay down beside me and dropped his head upon my lap. I loved the animal; wanted him to be mine. We had left our dogs with our relatives when starting out upon this far-south trail. This wolf would be our watch dog, our silent watcher; he would not bark at sight or scent of men; by uneasy movements he would warn us of their nearness. Upon hearing the barking of dogs, he might howl, but wolves were constantly howling, calling to one another about their various affairs, about approaching danger, their finds of food, meat animals dead from wounds or sinking in the quicksands of the rivers, and about gathering to chase a band of antelope, or attack, hamstring, and kill a lone old buffalo bull. And this wolf was a male, and therefore of kind heart. Like men, male wolves were good to their young; they hunted for them, brought food to them until they

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were old enough to go out and hunt for themselves.

Sun traveled on and on down the blue. In the valley and along its slopes the buffalo and antelope remained at peace. I felt more and more sure that no enemies were near; that the wolf had long since, in some way, become separated from the person who had fed and raised him. Came the time for us to awaken my father, and when we arose and went back into the timber, the wolf followed close at my heels. My father was already up, sitting among our saddles and packloads, smoking a pipe. The wolf looked at him suspiciously and circled round and round at a distance from him, and I told how the animal had come to me. It was evident, my father said, that a boy had raised him, for he would not be friendly with him or my mother. He was glad that I had the animal; he might be of great use to me.

We had still some of the meat of the elk that I had killed; we broiled portions of it, and I gave the wolf a large cut, which he ate eagerly, then wagging his tail, and begging for more. My father and mother each offered him a morsel of

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their broilings, but he would not take the pieces from their hands.

As Sun was setting, we saddled and packed our horses and went up the river until opposite a rock island named the Beaverhead, because of its resemblance to the head of that water animal. There, on the shore of the river, we unloaded our horses and put the loads upon a large raft that we built of dry driftwood. My father and I then stripped down to our breech-clouts, and, each mounting a horse, we drove the band out into the stream; and when certain that they were all swimming intent for the other shore, we slipped from ours and swam back. Then, with my mother and all our belongings upon the raft, we pushed it out into the river, and, clinging to it and swimming with our legs and one arm, worked it toward the opposite side. The current was swift, the raft large and set deep in the water. Try as we would, we made but slow progress across, and when at last we came to rest upon a sandbar of the other shore and looked about us, we found that we were but a little way above the mouth of Bighorn River. When we first pushed out from shore with the raft, the wolf swam be-



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side me; and then, tiring, he had climbed up onto it and remained close to me. And now, when we landed and began carrying our things ashore, he ran round and round, and in his gladness sprang again and again to lick my face; and he followed me close when, with my father, I went up the valley to get our horses. By the time we returned with them, and got them saddled and packed, the night was more than half gone.

We worked our way out through a large grove of cottonwoods, and struck up the valley of the Bighorn River, almost at once frightening a large herd of buffalo, which ran off with loud thunder and rattle of hooves. The wolf ran after them, paying no attention to my calls to him to come back. My mother said that I could not expect him to obey when he did not understand our Pikuni language. I feared that he had left me, never to return, but when in a little while I happened to look back, there he was, close to my horse's heels. As we went on through the night, herd after herd of buffalo ran off at our approach, and always the wolf chased them a little way. I feared that I might be unable to teach him never to chase animals until told to do so.

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When came the first faint light of day, my father led us into a large grove, and we unpacked close to the edge of the river. The numbers of buffalo in the valley were evidence, he said, that the Crows were encamped nowhere near, so he intended, during the day, to sleep and get, perhaps, a vision of what might be ahead of us. My mother and I, therefore, must by turns watch the country, and close-herd our horses in the grove, and by no means awaken him unless we should discover the approach of a war party or hunters from the Crow camp.

Said my mother: 'Are we, then, to watch throughout the long day with increasing hunger? Not a mouthful remains of that elk meat.'

'Hereabout are plenty of meat animals; our son has a bow and good arrows,' he replied, and, with his sacred pipe outfit, he turned from us and went down the grove.

'Let us rest, sleep, for a time. I will then try to kill some meat,' I proposed.

'No. Hunt now, then rest,' my mother replied.

I handed her my gun, strung my bow, got out several arrows, and started up the grove, she and the wolf trailing close after me. Fresh tracks, fresh

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droppings of elk and deer were plentiful, and at every step I expected to see some of the animals. None appeared; we went on and on up the grove, neared its upper end, and I then discovered, fresh in a dusty game trail, the tracks of a powerful hunter who had gone up ahead of us, a big real bear. My mother shivered when I called her attention to them. She looked fearfully about, and whispered: 'It is no wonder that there are no elk or deer in here! Come, let us turn back before the big sticky-mouth sees us!'<sup>1</sup>

I could see the end of the grove and then the green grass of a wide flat between it and the next grove upon our side of the river. I was quite sure that the real bear was out in the flat, or already in the other grove, and so went on, my mother fearfully following me, again and again begging that we turn back. We were soon standing in the shelter of the last of the trees and underbrush, and then she gave a sigh of relief as she leaned against me; for there in the open, halfway to the

<sup>1</sup> Nitapokaiyo (real bear) is the common name for the grizzly. Its other name, pahksikwoyi (sticky-mouth), is sacred, and can only be used by the Sun priests, the so-called medicine men of the Blackfoot tribes, and their head wives, who are sacred or medicine women.

## A Wolf Joins the Party

next grove, was the real bear, trying to dig out a ground squirrel. Of body as big as a buffalo, how foolish he was to work so hard for an animal whose little carcass would barely leave a taste in his great mouth! Furiously he dug; the earth that he threw up with his paws was like a cloud above him. He ceased digging, backed from the hole that he had made, sat up on his haunches and looked about in every direction. He was of great width of body; of great height; with one blow of his great paw he could break the neck of a big bull buffalo, and yet he was digging out little squirrels for his morning meal. He got down upon all four feet and went on up the flat and into the grove above. We saw several deer and cow elk and calves run from it, the elk out for the breaks of the valley, the deer straight down toward us. They paused in the edge of the timber, not thirty steps from where we stood, and I shot an arrow at one of them; it glanced from the slender branches of a willow, and struck into the animal's left hind leg, and it went limping out into the flat, following its swift companions. Wolf ran after it, with long leaps soon overtook it and brought it to the ground, tore open

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its throat, and by the time we got to the animal it was dead. We let Wolf fill himself with meat and blood, and when he trotted off to the river, we took the tongue and liver and manifold, some ribs and loin meat, and hurried down to our camping-place to cook our morning meal. Wolf soon joined us, and, full though he was, he ate some of our broilings. Gladly we fed him; but for his help we should have had no morning meal.

My mother took the morning watch and the herding of our horses within the grove. Sun was well past the middle when she awakened me and said that she was worn out and must sleep. She had been having a lot of trouble with the horses; they were constantly attempting to go from the grove to graze in the open flat. I soon put a stop to that by picketing the leaders. I then went to the upper end of the grove, Wolf following me, and sat in a growth of sage at the edge of a cut-bank dropping straight down into the river. Across, in a long, open bottom, a large herd of buffalo were grazing and slowly coming in to drink. Upon my side of the valley, and well beyond the grove into which the real bear had disappeared, was another large herd of buffalo;



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they had apparently already been in to water, and were now slowly climbing the slope to graze about upon the high plain. I watched them until the last of the stragglers went up over the rise and out of sight. Later on, the herd across from me came in to the river, drank and splashed about, and then lay down upon the wide and sandy shore, all but a few old cows that stood on watch, facing this way and that way, and chewing again the grass that they had eaten. When first the herd came in to water, Wolf closely eyed them, turning frequently to look at me, as though urging me to kill one of them. I told him that he was full up to his neck with good deer meat, and, if he must have more, he could just go to the carcass, close out upon the flat, and help himself. At that he turned round and round and lay down and slept.

I still felt sleepy, but dared not close my eyes. Sun traveled on and on down the blue. I became more and more sleepy. The valley all up and down it as far as I could see was quiet enough. Well, why not sleep for a short time? I had almost decided to do it, when Wolf, close by my side, suddenly awoke and raised his head, work-

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ing his big ears as he stared up the valley; then he got up and kept looking up that way, the hair upon his back all fluffed forward, his wet, black nose sniffing the wind, but apparently getting no scent of that which was causing the noise which he was hearing. And what could that be? Listen as I would, with open mouth, I could hear nothing but the low murmur of the river, the faint chirping of some little birds in the grove behind me. Then suddenly came in sight the herd of buffalo that had gone out upon the plain: back down the slope they came as fast as they could run, down into the valley and across it, and were hidden from me by the projecting grove. But not for long: they crossed the river and were in sight again, long lines of them swiftly climbing the other slope of the valley. I watched them until they topped it and went out of sight, and looked also for the cause of their flight: except in the mating season, buffalo run like that only from the presence of man.

Who had alarmed them? Crow hunters, or a war party sneaking across the plain? Neither appeared, and, after a last careful look at the valley slope and the rim of the plain, I ran down into the

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grove, awoke my mother and then my father, and told them what I had seen. We all three went to the upper edge of the grove and watched for the appearance of men, on horseback or afoot. Except for the herd of buffalo on the shore across from us, look as we would, we could not see a living thing. The valley, well above where the fleeing herd had crossed it, made a sharp bend and was hidden from us by the projecting point of plain. It was likely, my father said, that they who had frightened the buffalo were encamped up there, so it was best that, before we prepared to move on, he should go up there on discovery. Night soon came, and he started off, after ordering us to return to our camping-place, saddle and pack the horses, and quietly await his return.

It was so very dark in the timber that we had great difficulty in getting the horses together and the saddles and packs upon them. Last of all, my mother very carefully put on the pack containing my father's sacred buffalo medicine outfit, the while I held the horse, one of much spirit. Then, when all were packed and tethered to the trees and brush, we sat down in their midst, and Wolf came and lay at my side, thrusting his head into

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my lap, and I petted him. He was young, he had seen but one winter, and he soon slept. I remained very quiet, so as not to awaken him. My mother leaned against me and also slept.

After what seemed to me a very long time, Wolf suddenly raised his head, listened to something that he heard, then sprang to his feet and backed against me. I awoke my mother, whispered to her that Wolf was alarmed. We listened, but at first heard nothing; then came to our ears faint sound of footsteps, soft swishing of brush; and Wolf ceased pressing against me and again lay down.

Then my father called, 'Where are you?'

'Here! Here!' we quickly answered, and sprang up to meet him.

'The saddles and the packs are all on?' he asked.

'All of them.'

'Good. A little way up past the bend our long trail ends: the Crows are there encamped, hundreds of lodges of them, at the upper end of a long, wide, treeless bottom of the valley. Come, let us go on to them without delay.'

'Oh, no! No! Oh, my man! As you love our

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son, as you love me, I beg you now, and for the last time, before it is too late, to turn and lead us back to our own people, in our own country!' my mother cried.

'Woman, I know what I am doing: my visions have all been good. Fear not the Crows; they will not harm us. Come, we go to them,' he answered shortly.

There was naught for us to do but obey him. So sick with fear that we trembled, we untethered the horses, put up their ropes, got into the saddle, and trailed after him with the band.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FRIENDLY ENEMY

SOON after we left the grove, Old Woman <sup>1</sup> appeared in the eastern sky, and made the night quite light, and in the north the Seven Persons <sup>2</sup> warned us that the morning was not far off. On and on we went, up the valley, around its big bend, and came, at last, into the long and wide bottom that my father had mentioned. At its upper end a multitude of dogs were barking and howling, and Wolf raised high his head and answered them with the long and sad cry of his kind. We went on up the bottom until we could see, though dimly, the lodges of the great Crow camp, and then, close to the bank of the river, my father brought us to a stand and told us to unpack, and be quick about it. He helped us to get off the loads and set up the lodge, and, while we put up its lining and made it comfortable

<sup>1</sup> The Blackfeet tribes have two names for the moon: Kipitaki (Old Woman) and Kokomikiyis (Night-Red-Light).

<sup>2</sup> The constellation of Ursa Major, the Seven Persons, is the sky clock of all the tribes of the plains.

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with our couches and back-rests and our many belongings, he himself brought driftwood from a near sandbar of the river for our morning fire, and then set up his red painted tripod behind the lodge, and hung upon it the sacred pipe bundle and other things of his buffalo medicine. He and I then drove the horses to water; and, after picketing the fast buffalo runners around the lodge and hobbling the others, we went inside and sat upon our couches.

‘And now what are we to do?’ my mother asked, after she had put the last ones of her parfleches in their proper places.

‘Just what we should do if we were in camp with our own people,’ my father replied. ‘Get water, build a fire, and cook some meat. Cook plenty of meat, my woman, for, if you remember, I myself have not eaten since day before yesterday.’

My mother made no reply to that; she looked at me, pleadingly, and I knew what she meant: she was afraid to go to the river. I took the bucket, a large one of yellow metal that we had bought from the North traders, and went out and filled it, and when I returned, she had the fire

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built and meat broiling before it. My father ate a lot of it, but my mother and I were so fearful of our position, of what might happen to us with the coming of day, that we made but a pretense of eating. Wolf came in under the door flap and I gave him my portion of the broilings. He got up on my couch and lay down contentedly.

Looking up through the smoke hole, I saw the sky changing from black to blue: day had come. I started to go outside. I wanted to watch the Crow camp, see what the enemy would do when they discovered our lodge, set up so near them while they slept. My father signed to me to return to my couch, to remain seated. He got out his small pipe, filled and lighted it, smoked to Sun, Earth Mother, and the four world directions. And then, beginning with the song of the buffalo bulls, he sang, one after another, songs of his sacred medicine. He kept on singing them the while Sun appeared and turned the skin of our lodge to bright red, and then yellow. Sad, silent, bent over in our seats, my mother and I listened for footsteps, though we knew we could hear nothing of the kind above that loud singing. Fearfully we watched the curtain of the doorway,

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expecting it to be thrust aside by the enemy, eager to make an end of us.

As we learned later on in the Crow camp, that morning the first one to arise and step outside was a woman occupant of a lodge of its outer circle. She could hardly believe her eyes when she discovered our lodge out in the flat where no lodge had been the night before. She rubbed her eyes and looked again, made sure that she was not still asleep and dreaming, and called her man to join her. He, too, rubbed his eyes when he saw that to which she pointed, the lone lodge out in the flat. He stared at it. 'Not one of our lodges; it is a lodge of some other tribe of the plains,' he said to her, and shouted to the people to awake; to come out and see what had been set up near them during the night. Out they came from their lodges, came running from all parts of the camp, a multitude of people, and stared at our lodge and talked excitedly about it; and many of the leading men hurried to join their head chief, Dusty Bull, to learn what he would say.

By that time day had fully come, and a man newly arrived in the front of the crowd cried out:

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‘See, you warriors, the big black painting of a buffalo on the side of that lodge? Well, I can tell you about it. I have twice seen it, first on North Big River, and again where Point-of-Rocks River empties into South Big River: it is a lodge of the greatest of all enemy tribes, the Painted Cheeks.’ The second time I saw it, I took two fast buffalo runners that were tied before its doorway.’

‘Hai! Hai! A lodge of that enemy tribe!’ some one shouted. ‘Come, my friends, let us kill those within it!’

‘Yes! Yes! Let us kill them! At once kill them! Back to your lodges for your weapons, my friends! Be quick about it!’ cried another.

‘No! No!’ shouted Dusty Bull, as he turned about and faced the crowd. ‘Stand where you are! Hear me; this I say: Brave, very brave, is the owner of that Painted Cheeks lodge. He comes to us, not as an enemy, but with friendly intent, and, as you can see by the painting upon his lodge, the sacred bundle on the tripod behind

\* In the sign language, the Pikuni tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy is indicated by rubbing the right cheek with the right closed hand, meaning paint on the cheek.



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it, the many horses around it, he is a powerful and wealthy Sun priest. So is it that, putting from our minds all remembrance of that which his tribe — and perhaps he himself — have done to us, we must in all friendliness go and welcome him to our camp.'

'Yes! Yes! One so brave deserves our friendship, Painted Cheek though he be!' cried an old warrior, Little Otter by name, and many others voiced their assent to it.

Dusty Bull waited to hear from any who were against his decision. None spoke.

'So be it, then,' he said. 'And now, my children, back all of you to your lodges, and that you have to do, the while Little Otter, here, and I go to make this newcomer welcome to our country and our camp.'

My father finished singing the song of the buffalo robe, and as he was considering which one of his medicine songs he would next sing, my mother cried to him: 'Oh, my man! I beg you, sing no more. Let us listen for the approach of our enemies! Oh, let us go outside; out where we can see them coming, and there await our end.'

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His only reply to that was a smile, a shake of his head. He began singing the song of the ancient bull, that one which is so deep, so slow and sad. Then, when he was in the middle of the song, Wolf suddenly raised his head, set his ears forward, and stared at the doorway. And at that, my mother left my father's side and came and crouched beside me and held me close. We stared at the door curtain; as it was slowly thrust aside, Wolf shrank up against my other side, his ears flattened, his eyes like fire. Came in a tall and heavy man of maybe forty winters; of pleasant face, and hair so long that the braids nearly touched the ground. Of fine deer leather and plain were his shirt and leggings, but beautifully embroidered with colored quillwork were his cow leather wrap and his moccasins; he carried no weapons, not even a knife under his belt. Instantly my mother and I noticed that, and we partly lost our fear of him. Nor had the older man who came in after him any weapons. Side by side they stood between the doorway and the fireplace, and, after quick glances at us all, stood with bowed heads the while my father went on with his song to its slow, sad end. They looked

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at him then, smilingly replied 'Ho! Ho!' to his greeting, and took seats upon his couch, to which he motioned them.

Said the tall man then, in the sign language that is used by all the tribes of the plains: 'Painted Cheeks Sun man, we were surprised, this morning, when we got up and saw here your buffalo painted lodge. Tell us, whence come you, and why; and whither go you?'

'Not a Painted Cheeks. I am a Blackfeet,' my father signed. 'Far to the north, in the camp of my people, I did a great wrong. I left, never to return to them. I have come to live with you, you Crows, if you will let me set up my lodge within your circle.'

'You killed one of your Blackfeet tribe?'

'No. Something else; something that caused me great shame. So is it that I have come south to try to get away from all thought of it.'

'Blackfeet man, what is your name?'

My father looked at me and I signed to the Crow: 'His name is Many Swans.'<sup>1</sup>

Said the other Crow, the older man: 'He who

<sup>1</sup> Until recent years, men of the Blackfeet tribes were reluctant to tell their names; perhaps from a feeling of modesty.

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questions you is Dusty Bull. He is our chief, the great chief of us River Crows.'

The chief then signed: 'And he, this powerful warrior, he is Little Otter.'

'Yes. Good. I understand,' my father replied.

'Many Swans, though you had been a Painted Cheeks man, we should have welcomed you,' Dusty Bull continued. 'After all, that tribe and your tribe, and that other one, the Striped Mouths,<sup>1</sup> are one people, one language. Long have the three fought us, and we have fought them, yet, because you are here with us on this good day, my heart is glad. You are to come right into my camp, and by the side of my lodge set up your lodge.'

'And none of us shall show enmity toward you,' said Little Otter.

'Good. You are very generous. My friends, of my fast buffalo horses I give one to each of you. And now, let us smoke together,' my father replied, and filled and lit and passed his pipe.

<sup>1</sup> The sign for the Kaina (Bloods) tribe is fingers of the right hand drawn across the lips from left to right: striped — or painted — mouths.

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As the pipe went from one to another of the three, forth and back, forth and back, my father told of the dangers that we had met, and survived, along our trail from the north. In turn, the Crows gave him news of their camp. On the previous day they had moved from a place somewhere to the west to their present location; and later on were to go farther up the Bighorn Valley to a place where buffalo and all the other horned animals were in great numbers, and where the women would gather great quantities of berries, to dry for winter use. They were soon to be visited by their brother tribe, the Mountain Crows, at present camping somewhere in the mountains well to the south.

While the two Crows were sign-talking with my father, I noticed that they frequently glanced at Wolf, lying now quietly by my side, but with eyes constantly upon them.

And at last, again looking at Wolf, Little Otter signed to me: 'Boy, where got you that wolf?'

'Down on Elk River. He was traveling about; he got scent of me, came to me, wagging his tail,' I answered.

'Last Falling Leaves moon, when we were vis-



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iting the Earth Houses People,<sup>1</sup> on Big River, below the mouth of Elk River, I saw a tame wolf that was owned by a boy of that tribe,' Little Otter went on. 'It was smaller than this one; upon its neck was a quill-worked collar; it was very playful.'

'This one has a collar,' I signed, and, parting the hair of Wolf's neck, revealed it. And at that, both Crows expressed surprise, both signed to me that it was the wolf of the Earth Houses boy, now older, grown larger. And then they spoke to one another; and signed to my father and to me that the wolf had so loved its owner that it never would willingly have left him. It was likely, they said, that traveling west with father and others, the boy and his whole party had been wiped out by an enemy party, and then the wolf, wandering about, had come to me.

My father agreed with them that that was likely why Wolf had happened to come to me. I said that one thing was sure, Wolf was now mine, and I should keep him mine.

Three times my father filled and lighted and passed the pipe, after the Crows had shared with

<sup>1</sup> The Mandan Tribe.

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us our morning meal that my mother prepared — broiled meat and some fine pemmican that she had carefully kept for just such an occasion, and then, telling us to move at once into their camp circle, they went out; my father with them, to give them each the fast buffalo horse that he had promised.

The door curtain dropped behind them, and my mother, smiling and happy, hugged me: 'We survive!' she cried. 'They who were our enemies are actually our friends! Your father was right about it, I all wrong! Never, never again will I doubt the truth of your father's visions. Come, help me, my son. As quickly as possible let us pack our things and move into the camp of our new friends.'

Then, suddenly, she sat up and was silent, thoughtful. After a time she exclaimed: 'But what was it, the shameful thing your father did, that caused him to part us from our own people?'

'Yes. What could it have been?' said I.

By the time we were all packed up and ready to move, Dusty Bull and Little Otter returned to us, riding the horses that my father had given them, and escorted us to their great camp. I was

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glad that the people did not all come running to watch us enter it. They went about their various affairs, pausing only to look at us and our outfit, and smile friendly greetings, the most of them. We rode through the center of the great circle and unpacked our animals close on the right of Dusty Bull's lodge, whose women came and embraced my mother, helped her set up her lodge, and then brought in to us a lot of food: dry meat, pemmican, dried plums, the latter the first of that fruit that I had ever seen; there are no plum trees in our country, which is colder than the Elk River country.

During the remainder of that day we saw little of my father, as he was invited by one after another of the leading men of the Crows to visit them in their lodges. And women of the camp were constantly coming to make presents to my mother; they brought food, beautifully tanned skins, many articles of use and of ornament, and sat and talked with her in the sign language. As soon as our lodge was put up and I started our horses out to graze, I was joined by a number of boys of my own age, who asked me many questions about our Blackfeet country, our different

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tribes, and the number of lodges in each of them. They envied me the possession of a gun; passed mine from one to another and eagerly examined it, put it to their shoulders and aimed at various rocks and bushes. And when I signed to them that, on Arrow River, we had been attacked by a war party — wearers of soft-soled moccasins — and that I had killed one of the enemy with it, I saw that they suddenly had real respect and liking for me. They remained with me until Sun went down behind the mountains, and then helped me drive in my band of horses and picket the fast runners around the lodge. And all the time that they were with me, they tried to be friends with Wolf, but he would not go near them.

While my mother and I were eating our evening meal, we heard the Crow camp-crier going the round of the lodges, shouting to the people some order of their chiefs. A little later, my father came in and told us what it was. Two days hence there was to be a run of a great herd of buffalo that had been discovered upon the plain to the east of the river; in the meantime, the hunters were forbidden going out there or even after deer upon the east side of the river, lest

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they frighten the herd and so make it more difficult to get the great quantity of meat that was required for the camp.

After our many nights of travel and of short and uneasy sleeps in the daytime, it was good to lie down upon our couches in our comfortable lodge, to sleep without fear of attack by some wandering war party. We were all three very tired; we slept almost at once, and with break of day we arose refreshed and glad of heart that the Crows, our one-time enemies, were now our friends. My father and I turned our horses out to graze, then hurried to the river and bathed; we returned to our lodge and the good food that my mother had ready for us. Sun was not high when men and women began coming to our lodge to visit with my father and mother and to invite them to feasts and smokes in their lodges. I went out and drove our horses to water and then to good grass. I then visited with my friends of the day before and met more of the boys of the camp. Of them all, I liked best Black Elk, the son of Dusty Bull, a boy of fine face and body and of my own number of winters, and he showed great liking for me. We were together all the long day,



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and, as night drew near, he went with me to bring in the horses. From my mother he had learned my name, the name I had then, the one given me when I was born.

As we were nearing camp with the band, he signed to me: 'Bear Plume, it is now only two days that I have known you, but I like you very much. How is it? Do you like me?'

'Yes, I have very strong liking for you,' I replied.

'Good. Let us, as Sun sees us, hears us, let us be close friends from now on, so long as we live.'

'Your thought is my thought. Yes, let us be ever friends, close friends, in all things of one heart, you and I.'

At that he smiled. His eyes were beautiful; almost there were tears in them; and in mine, too, I think. We embraced each other; we rubbed cheek against cheek. And as we went on with the horses, our hearts were big within us, we were very happy. Later on, in the evening, I told my mother and father of the vow of friendship that we two had made, and they were glad.

We had been told that, on the following day, there was to be a great chase. So, early the next

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morning, my father and I watered our horses and turned out to graze all but five of them: the two fast runners that we were to ride, a gentle, safe horse for my mother, and two others to load with the meat and hides of the buffalo that we should kill. We bathed and then ate our morning meal.

Sun was well up in the blue when the start was made for the chase. We were more than three hundred hunters, followed by many women with pack-horses and horses drawing travois. We forded the river, climbed the long slope of the valley, and, just over the rim of the plain, charged into a great herd of buffalo there grazing and resting. They were many: cows and calves, young bulls, hundreds and hundreds of them. They swarmed densely together and ran, and the pounding of their hooves upon the hard ground was like thunder in our ears. Our trained horses were as eager as were we in the chase; we singled out fat cows for our arrows and the horses fiercely ran after them, carried us close up to their sides, and cunningly sheered off from their sharp horns when our bowstrings twanged. On and on we went until our horses

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could no longer keep up with the tireless herd.

We stopped to let them regain their wind and looked back at the way we had come: the plain was black with dead and dying buffalo; and where the chase had begun, the women were already examining the arrows in the carcasses, and so identifying the particular ones that their men had killed. And by this time the men of the camp who for one reason and another had not taken part in the chase were arriving with their women to help skin and butcher our kills, for shares of the hides and meat. My father had killed nine and I five fat cows and young fat bulls. We gave away all but two, which we helped my mother skin and cut up, and load upon our pack-animals; and at that we took only the choice parts of the meat.

Upon the way back to camp my close friend, Black Elk, and other friends joined me. They envied me my part in the chase, the kills that I had made. None of them had fast buffalo horses, and so they had done nothing but help butcher the kills of their elders. They were greatly surprised when, in answer to their questions, I

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signed to them that nearly all Blackfeet youths of my age were owners of fast runners and killers of buffalo.

Before set of Sun that day the great Crow camp was red with lines of drying meat, and the ground was white with clean fleched hides pegged out to dry. And as night came on, everywhere in the circle of the lodges there were the chatter and laughter of happy people, singing and beating of drums. In our own lodge, while my father filled and passed the pipe again and again, a number of guests told of their far war trails and the *coups* that they had counted in battles with their various enemies. But never once did they tell of the raids that they had made against our Blackfeet tribes, nor did my father even hint that he had taken more than one Crow scalp.

Pleasantly now passed the summer days. I rode, swam, hunted the deer kind with Black Elk and other not so near Crow friends, Wolf always with me, but never friendly with them. Came the Berries-Ripe moon, and, moving down across the western plain, the Mountain Crows set up their lodges in the lower part of the long flat in which we were encamped. They were not so

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many as their brother tribe, the River Crows; in all, not more than two hundred warriors. No sooner were their lodges up and smoke rising from them than my father went with Dusty Bull to visit their leading men. In the evening, when he returned, he told us about them: their head chief, Long Bow, was a very kindly, good-looking man, but old; apparently becoming childish. One eager to succeed him, Low Horn, of about forty winters, was mean of face, loud of voice, a braggart, and, according to Dusty Bull, not well liked by his tribe, but so feared by them that he would, likely, soon be named to take Long Bow's place.

On the following day, and often thereafter, I saw this Low Horn in our camp, as he went here and there to visit the various chiefs. He was, as my father had said, a man of very mean face. I noticed that he had always at his left side, suspended by a thong over his shoulder, a thin, long, quill-ornamented case of red painted deer leather; his sacred medicine, of course. I wondered just what it might be.

Came a day when my father gave a feast and smoke to Dusty Bull, Long Bow, and lesser



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chiefs and warriors of both Crow tribes; eighteen men in all, and among them Low Horn of the mean face.

The food disposed of and the pipe going the round of the circle, the guests one after another told of their war trails and the *coups* that they had made upon their enemies; and as each one told his tale, he used also the sign language, so that my father would fully understand it. They had, of course, time and time again recounted their *coups*; each one's tale was familiar to all the others; they told them now only for the entertainment of my father.

Meanly smiling, contemptuously sniffing, Low Horn heard these recitals, impatiently awaited his turn, and then said, and signed to my father:

‘Blackfeet man, of all the men of our two Crow tribes, I, Low Horn, count the greatest *coup*.’

So saying, he unslung his medicine case, laid it upon the ground before him, tapped it with his fingers, and continued: ‘Yes, the greatest *coup* of all us Crows, and within this case is proof of it.

‘Some summers back, with my friend, Running Antelope, I went north to raid the worst of

## The Friendly Enemy

our many enemy tribes, the Blackfeet. Many nights we traveled, and at last discovered, in a valley in the Divided Hills, a great camp of the enemy. Soon after daylight we approached a band of the horses of the camp, were about to take them, when five men rushed out from the timber and attacked us, at once killing my companion. They shot at me; their arrows were like rain about me, and I shot at them, never once missing their bodies. One after another, four of them I killed, and then my arrows were all gone. The fifth man fired his last arrow at me, and it struck deep into my shoulder — see, here is the scar of the wound it made. And what did I do then? I will tell exactly what I did: I pulled that arrow from my shoulder, tearing my flesh, the pain was great, and, fitting it to my bow, I shot it into the breast of that last one of my enemies. As he fell, I ran to him, plucked the arrow from his body, counted *coup* upon him. Then, as I was about to round up the band of horses to catch one of them, mount it, and drive the rest before me upon the homeward trail, lo! many of the enemy came running toward me from their camp, yes, fully twenty men. I had not

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time to catch one of the horses; the approaching enemy were too many for me to fight. I had but one arrow, the one that had wounded me, the one with which I had killed the second man. I had not time to look about for other arrows. With this one arrow I turned and ran into the timber, on and on through it, looking for a place in which to conceal myself. There was but little underbrush. I despaired of finding sufficient cover. I saw a squirrel climb a tree and disappear in its thick and dark foliage. Well, I would do that too. Up it I went, the frightened squirrel loudly scolding me. He went to the very top of the tree and there remained, constantly voicing his fright and twitching his bushy tail. He would attract the eyes of my pursuers. Where the tree branches were most dense, I stood upon one of them, clasping the trunk. I heard my enemies coming; scattered out, searching for me in every patch of brush. Two of them paused right under me, talking, but never once looked up. They went on and I breathed freely. But I did not leave my hiding-place. All the long day I remained there in the tree, and many times those who sought me passed near it. Night came.

## The Friendly Enemy

I descended to the ground only with great pain, for my shoulder was now swollen and my arm useless. With but one hand, one arm, I could not possibly catch a horse of the enemy, and so set out afoot for home. And, traveling only at night, I at last arrived in the camp of my people. And now, Blackfeet man, I prove to you this that I have related!'

So saying, that Low Horn, that mean-faced chief of the Mountain Crows, drew the arrow from his medicine case and stuck it into the ground before my father and me. Open-mouthed, we stared at it, at the black painted buffalo head upon the shaft, just above the feathering: it was my father's arrow! Instantly, we had the same thought; we remembered that long-ago morning in the Divided Hills, when, going to round up our horses, we discovered two enemies approaching them, and my father killed one and wounded the other, the man running off with the arrow sticking into his shoulder; and this Low Horn, this chief of the Mountain Crows, was that man, there beside us sitting, counting a *coup* that was one big lie! Attempting to prove his tale with my father's arrow!

## In Enemy Country

Situated as we were, there in that apparently friendly but really enemy camp, I had not the slightest thought that my father would expose the chief, and make him out a liar before that circle of chiefs. Think, then, what was my surprise, my fear, when I saw him reaching for his bowcase and quiver at the head of his couch.

I could not help crying out: 'No! Father! Do not show your arrows! Do not tell what we know about this, else we die right here!'

'Though I die for it, this gathering of men shall know Low Horn for the liar that he is,' he replied.

And, on my other side, I heard my mother mutter: 'Crazy, wholly crazy, your father! Oh, my son, now comes our end!'



## CHAPTER V

### A LIAR'S PUNISHMENT,

FEARFULLY, barely breathing, our hearts like stones within us, my mother and I watched my father lay his bowcase and quiver across his lap, pat it, and then, his eyes all fire, his lips tight shut, begin his sign talk.

‘Dusty Bull! Low Bow! and you others here, my friends,’ he began, ‘in all his talk, this man told but one true thing: he and his companion really did find our Blackfeet camp in the Divided Hills. On that morning that he mentioned, my son, here beside me, and I went out early to round up our band of pack-horses and travois horses. As we worked our way out toward the edge of the timber, we saw two men, two enemies, as we knew by the feathers straight up at the back of their heads, approaching the band. Hurrying on, from the edge of the timber I shot and killed one of the men, and, as the other ran off, I wounded him: with my arrow sticking in his shoulder, he escaped into the timber, and

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though many of us searched for him all the long day, we never found him, and so decided that he had died of his wound, somewhere in the thick underbrush. But now I know that he did not die! There he sits. And here before me is my arrow, my very own arrow, with which he counted his lying *coup*. My friends, look! With these I prove the truth of this that I have told you!' And at that, my father drew a handful of arrows from his quiver and set them into the ground in a circle around that other arrow. And all our guests saw, plainly enough, the buffalo head painted upon the shaft of each of them!

Apikuni, my friend, during my long life I have witnessed many terrible scenes. I have seen men painfully dying of wounds received in battle with the enemy; seen others frightfully gored and trampled when running buffalo; still others mangled by the claws of real bears; but most terrible of all was that which followed my father's exposure of Low Horn's lying *coup*. Silently, fiercely, that gathering of Crow chiefs and great warriors stared at that circle of upright painted arrows, and at Low Horn, open-mouthed, afraid-eyed, shrinking back in his seat

## A Liar's Punishment

like a trapped coyote! Long Bow, the Mountain Crows chief, at the time had the big pipe that was going the round of the circle. He laid it upon the ground in front of him and edged forward, as if preparing to rise. The others, noticing his movements, also straightened up. As he suddenly sprang from his seat and hurled himself upon the liar, as one man they did likewise, shouting mightily. By the hair of his head, his arms, his clothing, they drew Low Horn through the doorway out into the camp circle and there began beating him with their fists, with sticks of firewood, and heavy-handled quirts. They kicked him, tore his hair, stripped him of his clothing, calling him a coward, a liar, a woman-dog; he, meanwhile, shrilly shrieking with the pain of it all, dreadful shrieks that hurt my ears, made me sick inside. Came running and surrounded us all the people of the great camp, the men inquiring what was the trouble, the women frightened, excited; the children crying, the dogs rushing about barking, howling, and fighting one another.

Bruised, blood trickling from a hundred places in his torn flesh, Low Horn ceased screaming, lay

## In Enemy Country

still as though dead, and the men ceased beating him. Came his three women and looked down upon him, their dry, hard eyes, their tight-closed lips and wrinkled noses showing that they had no love for their man; but they lifted him — none too gently — and bore him off to their lodge.

Said Dusty Bull then to the great crowd of the two tribes, and in sign language to my father: 'Meanest of all men are those who boast of brave deeds that they never performed. For his many winters of lying, that Low Horn has been given the punishment that he deserved.'

Said Long Bow to his people, and also in signs for my father's understanding: 'You, Mountain Crows, you, my children, from this day you will not hunt with Low Horn; you will not visit him nor invite him to your lodges!'

'Listen, you, River Crows: Long Bow's words to his children are my words to you. From this time that counter of lying *coups* is to be as one dead to you!' shouted Dusty Bull. -

Then, as the people began to go their various ways, my father's guests reëntered our lodge, and the half-smoked pipe was lighted again and started upon the round of the circle, and my

## A Liar's Punishment

father had to tell again of that long-ago morning when he had wounded Low Horn and killed his companion, who, we learned, was a Mountain Crow named Little Badger. Of all that gathering of the great chiefs and warriors of the two tribes, not one showed the least hatred toward my father for what he had done, for having killed one of their blood; on the other hand, they gave him much praise for telling them the truth about Low Horn.

When the last pipe of the feast was being smoked, they talked together for some little time, and then Dusty Bull, interpreting for all of them, signed to my father: 'Many Swans, powerful Sun's man, we have counceled about you; we know that you are of good heart, generous, fearless. We like you; we are glad that your lodge is one of the lodges of our circle; so is it that we say this: you and yours are now members of our tribe.'

'You all are very good to us. We are happy that we are here with you. We shall do all that we can to deserve and keep your friendship,' my father replied.

Said my mother, after our guests had departed:



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‘I hope that I shall never again see anything like that we have just witnessed. I never heard of the like. Our people, the Siksika, and our brother tribes are real people; they do not beat a liar, they just turn their backs to him! I do not want to be a member of the Crow tribe. Many Swans, I want you to take us back whence we came.’

‘The Crows are good people; their country is good country: here we remain!’ my father loudly exclaimed; and at that she went outside and wept for a long time.

Near Sun’s going-down, I went to bring in our buffalo runners, and Black Elk accompanied me. Signed he: ‘It was good of your father to tell us the truth about Low Horn. Well, that mean-faced one was fully paid for his big lies.’

At that I shivered; frowned; and he asked what was my trouble, was I sick?

‘Yes. Sick from that I saw,’ I answered. ‘My people never beat one of their number, never strike one another; they are too proud to do that; they say that they are above the ways of dogs.’

Surprised, he stared at me. ‘How, then, would

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you Blackfeet punish a liar like Low Horn?' he asked.

'Long ago there was one of us who was just such a liar. He could not bear the silence, the angry stares of those who had been his friends. He grieved and grieved over his lies; he went to the top of a cliff and sprang from it: his women went not to take up his body and give it burial, nor did they mourn his going.'

'You Blackfeet, you are a very gentle people,' he laughingly signed.

'But all enemy tribes fear us.'

My new friend made no reply to that.

That night there was deep groaning, affrighted crying, in Low Horn's lodge, and on the following morning his women told that his body was burning hot and he was making talk that was without sense. Toward night he became quiet, his body cooled, and it was known that he would recover from his terrible beating; but none thought that good news. Days passed, during which we got no sight of the man; he went out only at night.

Came then to my mother a close friend, one of Dusty Bull's women, and signed to her: 'Last night, as I was about to pass Low Horn's lodge,

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I heard him angrily singing. I stopped and listened. His song of hate ended,' she said, 'so low that I just could hear him: "Yes, that Painted Cheeks one, he who wounded me long ago; he who was the cause of this my torn and aching body, he shall not survive! Oh, you Big Ears,<sup>1</sup> bird of night, my helper! Help me now; show me the way to end his trail!" And then he again sang his bad song. My thought was: "He must be alone; he would not say that before his women." Noiselessly I stepped to the doorway of the lodge, turned aside an edge of the curtain, and looked in. He was alone. I hurried away.'

Signed my mother: 'A man who takes a Big Ears for his helper must have a very bad heart.'

'Yes. Tell your man to be ever watchful of him.'

Said my father, when my mother had finished telling this to us, 'Ha! That liar, that coward, I am not afraid of him.'

'Have sense! Unless you want to be shot in your back, be ever watchful of that man,' she strongly advised.

Dusty Bull's woman, of course, told him of

<sup>1</sup> Big Ears, the Great Horned Owl.

## A Liar's Punishment

Low Horn's prayer to his bird helper, and both camps soon knew of it. Both Dusty Bull and Long Bow came to my father and warned him to be watchful of his enemy.

'Well, let me make an end to this now. Let me go call the man out to fight me, with bow and arrows, knives or spears, and on horseback or afoot, as may be his choice,' my father pleaded.

'That would be useless; he would not come out,' said Dusty Bull.

'If he would fight and should you kill him, it would anyhow be the end for you. He has relatives, and, though they despise him for his great lie, they would feel obliged to end your trail, especially as you come from the tribe that is our worst enemy,' Long Bow explained.

'My friends, as you advise me, I shall be watchful of that man, but I tell you now that it will not be Low Horn who ends my trail,' my father signed; and so ended the talk.

Daily hunted by the men of both the Crow camps, the buffalo and other grass-eaters were becoming scarce within easy riding distance, so the Mountain Crows decided to move back into their high country.

## In Enemy Country

The evening before they left, their chief, Long Bow, gave a parting feast for my father, and said to him, during the smoking of the last pipe: 'My friend, I have taken great liking for you and am sorry that, to-morrow, we are to part.'

'As your heart is toward me, so is mine toward you,' my father answered.

'I would be glad to have you camp and hunt with me, with my mountain children, but as it is, after this that has happened, I think it best that you remain with your other good friend, Dusty Bull. My bad child, that Low Horn, I shall watch him; you shall quickly hear from me if he leaves my camp.'

'Good. You are a real friend; I take your words. In the not-far-off future we must meet again and have many a smoke together,' my father replied.

On the following morning my friend Black Elk and I watched the Mountain Crows break camp. The while Low Horn's women were taking down their lodge and loading their pack-horses and travois, he sat apart from them, motionless as a rock, close wrapped even to his mean eyes in a new cow leather toga.



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Black Elk pointed to the toga and laughed: 'You remember his old wrap, how it was painted?'

'Yes. Upon it was painted his great *coup*: the five of my people that he — killed not, and my father's arrow.'

'Yes, that was it. And so proudly he wore it!'

The tribe began moving out. Family after family, each with its band of free horses, rode out in line upon the trail to the west, and last to go were Low Horn's women, he himself far behind them, the last man of the long caravan, still muffled to his eyes in his new wrap. Almost I was sorry for him.

Two days after the Mountain Crows left us, we all moved to the mouth of the Bighorn River. On the following day we went down the valley of Elk River, and on the next day set up our lodges at the mouth of Rosebud River. That is the name the Crows gave the little stream. I did not see that there was more rosebrush in its valley than there was in any other valley of the country. But here, in the valley of each river and in the breaks running up to the plains, were now ripe plums, service berries, and cherries, and the

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women and children began gathering and drying great quantities of them for winter use.

On our second evening here, Little Otter and several other leading men of the camp came into our lodge, and my father signed to them that he was glad of their presence; he filled a pipe, and my mother began preparing a little feast for them. We noticed by their glances at one another that they had come for something more than a smoke.

When my father had refilled the pipe and lighted it, Little Otter signed to him: 'My friend, just before you came to us, up on Bighorn River, four of our camp, out hunting, were killed by a war party from a tribe that is your enemy as well as our enemy, the Assiniboines. The women and children of those four fine men are constantly mourning, and we have to dry their tears; so is it that, because you, with your powerful buffalo medicine, have great favor with Sun, and because you are yourself a great warrior, we ask that you lead a party of us against those killers of our people.'

My mother and I thought that he would at once refuse the request, for, as I have told you,

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he always went alone upon raids against the enemy; so we were surprised when he replied: 'As you ask, so will I do. With glad heart I will lead you and your party against those cut-throats, killers of your people and my Blackfeet people.'

Said my mother to him, after our visitors left: 'After your always lone raids against the enemy, why is it that you now will lead a party of these Crows upon the war trail?'

'Just because they are Crows, and are very good to us; have made us, even without our asking, members of their tribe,' he replied.

So was it that, on the following day, my mother and other women put up a great sweat-lodge for him and the men he was to lead against the enemy. In it they prayed Sun to save them from the dangers of the trail and give them success against the enemy. Came evening, and my father cautioned me to be ever watchful for our one Crow enemy, Low Horn; to take good care of my mother; close-herd our horses; keep our lodge well supplied with meat. He then took up his sacred pipe bundle and his weapons and shield, and joined his party of twenty men.

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Sadly my mother and I watched him lead them off down the valley.

Signed an old woman to us: 'They go on foot. They will return with many horses, many scalps.'

'Pray Sun for that,' my mother signed back.

We returned to our lodge, and, low of heart, were staring at the little fire. Footsteps approached, the door curtain was thrust aside, and, smiling and bright-eyed, Black Elk came in, followed by his mother with robes and blankets.

'My father sent me,' he signed, 'to live with you, if you like, until your father returns.'

'Good! I am glad that you have come,' I answered.

My mother also was pleased, and she and Black Elk's mother soon fixed up a good couch for him, across the lodge from me. He sat upon it, and Wolf, coming in, went cautiously to him, sniffed at his knee, and then wagged his tail, the while he licked his hand. Never before had the animal offered to be friendly with any one other than myself. I was surprised at his actions and pleased; it was proof that he had taken to Black Elk because he knew that he was my close friend. He already understood my language, and I

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signed to Black Elk that he must learn it, so that he could also tell Wolf what to do when we went out hunting or out upon discovery. I then said to the animal, '*Mahkwiyi, püksiput!*'<sup>1</sup> and he came straight to me. Black Elk then repeated the words, and Wolf recrossed the lodge to him, ears working, tail wagging, and looking proudly back at me. So was it that, in learning how to order Wolf about, my friend soon wanted really to speak Blackfeet, and thereafter, when signing to him, I also spoke what I had to say. He was easy to teach; in a short time, he was able to speak our language as though he were himself a Blackfeet.

Daily now, Black Elk and I rode out with my mother and Dusty Bull's women, to guard them while they filled their sacks with the various kinds of berries. They, as well as all the other women of the great camp, were greedy for the fruit; too greedy; everywhere between the lodges

<sup>1</sup> *Mahkwiyi, püksiput!* (Wolf, come). Unwittingly, the narrator here reveals a marked trait of the Blackfeet tribes: they were ever so proud that they would not learn the language of the various outside tribes with whom they were intermittently at peace. On the other hand, there were fluent speakers of Blackfeet in the tribes of Oregon, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Canada, and Dakota, with the one exception of the Sioux, with whom the Blackfeet never once smoked a peace pipe.



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were berries drying upon smooth buffalo raw-hides, more and more until it became difficult for one to find a way between them in the daytime; at night the hides were rolled up and piled just outside the lodges of the berriers. Came a day when Dusty Bull told his women to cease gathering the fruit. My mother also had drying more than we could use during the coming winter. So was it that, at last, Black Elk and I were free to go and come as we would during the long summer days, so long as we kept my mother and Black Elk's own people well supplied with meat. The latter were many; not only Dusty Bull and his women and nine children, two lodges of them, but also the lodge of Dusty Bull's father, mother, and several other old relatives. At first, we easily kept these many mouths well filled with food; there were plenty of elk and deer in the valley of each river, and herds of buffalo and bands of antelope on the near plains. But each day many of the animals were killed by the several hundreds of hunters of the tribe, and the frightened survivors moved farther from our camp; and at last, when the nearest of the herds became distant from us almost a whole day's ride, we had

## A Liar's Punishment

no longer any time for playing with our friends.

Telling none but my mother of our plan to go out ahead of all the other hunters, we went early to sleep one evening, and long before morning we saddled two fast runners and two pack-animals and, with Wolf following, struck out for the far-off buffalo herds. When daylight came, we were well up the valley of Rosebud River, following a trail deeply worn by the many hunters of our camp; deep with dust that rose in a snake-like cloud as it was stirred by the feet of our horses, and which caused Wolf to sneeze and sneeze until, becoming wise, he circled on past us and took the lead. It was our intention to go on up the valley until we should find buffalo; but soon after Sun appeared, Black Elk brought his horse to a stand and signed to me: 'You see how worn is this trail; all of our hunters have followed it upon their way out to buffalo. Let us leave it, go east, where they have not traveled, and so, maybe, much sooner sight a herd.'

'Wise your thought. Lead east,' I answered, and herded our pack-horses from the trail to follow him. Wolf, watching us, turned back and followed me.

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Leaving the valley, we rode out upon a plain cut with coulees, dotted with slender buttes. A plain that, as far as we could see, had no life upon it other than a few wolves and coyotes and little gatherings of sagehens. On and on we went, and it was not until Sun was straight above us that we found animals worth killing, a few antelope resting upon the northern slope of a ridge quite a long way ahead of us. I was about to sign to Black Elk that I would try to approach them and kill one with my gun — we were very hungry by that time — when they sprang from their beds and ran off. We went to the top of the ridge that they left, and from there had a good view of the country; no buffalo, not even a lone old bull was in sight. I proposed that we turn and go south toward the head of Rosebud River, where were still some herds of the animals, but my friend signed to me that many of our hunters were already out there, chasing them; that we should have a better chance to get meat by keeping on to the east, toward Tongue River, where his Crow people had not hunted for many moons; buffalo should be plentiful there; we should surely there find elk and deer.

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So was it that we kept on eastward, I somehow with low heart, with fear that that way was trouble for us. The day was now very hot; we became more and more thirsty; our horses' mouths foamed from want of water. At last, when Sun was low in the west, we neared a high ridge in the plain from which, my friend signed me, we should see the breaks of a small creek running into Powder River, and we should drink from it before night. At that, we went on faster. We topped the ridge, and with choked voice my friend began singing a Crow hunters' song of plenty; and well he might, for there ahead of us, near and far and upon each side of the east-flowing stream, and in its narrow valley, were many herds of buffalo and antelope. We slowly backed down the ridge out of sight of them and counseled together. Our horses were now too tired and thirsty for the chase, and night was near; it was best that we sneak down to the creek and camp and make our hunt early in the morning. But we needed meat; without eating, we should have little strength for the morrow's chase. We went south into a long coulee running down to the creek, and, dismounting, and with strung

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and arrow-fitted bow, Black Elk went on well ahead to try to discover and kill a deer or elk. Already our horses scented water and wanted to make a break to it, so I gathered up their ropes and made no move until he had gone from sight around a bend of the coulee, and then I trailed slowly after him. The coulee deepened, widened. I came to some big berry trees and saw that their branches were heavy with the ripe fruit. Here was more than enough food for our evening and morning meals. I was about to hurry on and advise my friend not to try to make a kill, lest he by some chance frighten the near herds, when there came to me from below the sudden roar and rattling of many hooves, and well I knew what that meant. I hurried down around another bend of the coulee and saw Black Elk standing in a cloud of settling dust, staring at the tail end of a herd of buffalo that was going out over the rim of the coulee; I saw, too, a yearling cow dying at the foot of the steep slope.

‘You should not have killed,’ I signed to my friend when I had ridden to him. ‘Back there plenty of big berries for us. Now those running buffalo will frighten all the other herds away.’



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'You don't understand,' he answered. 'I did not see the buffalo; though very close, they were hidden behind this grove of trees and brush. They got scent of me and came right out and began rushing up that slope. They would frighten the other herds, anyhow; it would make no difference if I killed one of them, so was it that I arrowed that little cow.'

So that was it. What was done was done. I dismounted and we tied our horses. But, before butchering the cow, we climbed to the rim of the coulee and looked out upon the plain: the herd of buffalo that my friend had frightened was running northward, and all the other herds of them and the antelope also that were upon our side of the creek were swiftly trailing after it. But the herds upon the plain south of the creek remained where they were, quietly feeding and resting. So, after all no harm had been done; we should, in the morning, have to go only a little farther to make a good killing. Wolf was uneasy; he wanted us to go back to the dead cow; he led us to it, wagged tail and jumped about, eager for the pieces of meat that were to be his share of the butchering. We skinned the animal completely,

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cut it up, tied the pieces two and two, ready for packing on the morrow, and, piling them upon the hide, took the tongue and some of the liver, mounted our horses, and rode down the coulee to the creek; and drank, we and the animals, until we were like to burst.

Unsaddling, and then hobbling our horses, we left them to graze, took armfuls of bark from a dead cottonwood, close to the creek, where the tree growth was heaviest, built a fire and were soon broiling the tongue and slices of the liver. Wolf, heavy with all that I had fed him, slept close at my side.

Best of all meat is buffalo tongue broiled over cottonwood coals; yet was this that my friend and I were eating all but tasteless in my mouth, for again I had become low of heart, fearful of near danger of some kind.

So was it that I signed: 'We can eat in the dark; let us put out this fire.'

'Wait until we have finished. I like to see the food that I eat. Also, my bowstring is near breaking. I must put on another one before we sleep.'

I said no more. We finished eating. Black Elk drew his bow from its case, took off the string,

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felt in his pouch for a fresh one, took it out, put an end in his mouth to soften it; and just then I saw, close beyond my friend, men suddenly spring to their feet and rush toward us. 'Enemies!' I cried, reaching for my gun, behind me. Too late! Other enemies had it; my bow-and-arrows case too. We were completely surrounded by them. Wolf, springing up, leaned against me, glaring at them, his white teeth bared. We were powerless to defend ourselves. Here came our end, I thought. Haiya! So young I was! I did not want to die!

## CHAPTER VI

### CAPTURED

WE sprang to our feet, Black Elk and I, snatching out our knives, watchfully staring at our enemies, turning quickly to look at those behind us. It struck me that they did not appear to be angry; some of them seemed to be smiling at our fright.

One of them, tall and slender, came nearer to our little fire and signed to us: 'We are not going to kill you, put back your knives.'

Somehow, we obeyed.

'Good!' he signed, and said something to his companions. One of them handed me my gun, another gave me my bow-and-arrows case. Still another, widely smiling, took up Black Elk's stringless bow and gave it to him. We knew not what to think of this. Were these men just playing with us, only at last suddenly to crush our heads?

'Now, let us sit down, let us talk,' the slender man, evidently the chief of the party, went on.

## Captured

‘You two sit there’ — pointing to one side of the fire — ‘we on this side.’

Down we all sat as directed. The slender man talked with his companions, and we looked them all over. They were clothed much as we were, in deer-leather leggings and shirts, and their wraps were of cow leather, some of them painted with their wearer’s *coups*. They were twelve in all, and four had guns, the others only bows and arrows. I was wondering who they were, when I saw that several of them had buffalo tails attached to the heels of their moccasins; then I knew, for I had heard talk about it; more than once heard it said that the Spotted People<sup>1</sup> so ornamented their footwear. They were an enemy tribe; never had any of our Blackfeet tribes made peace with them; they were also enemies of the Crows. So again my thought was that these men were but pretending to be friendly, and would

<sup>1</sup> Kishtsipi Tupiks (Spotted People) is the Blackfeet name for the Cheyennes. I have also heard them called Kishtsipimi Tupiks (Spotted Horses People). In the long-ago, the tribe had great numbers of pinto horses, hence, most likely, the Blackfeet name. The Cheyennes’ own name for themselves is Tistsistas (Our People, or Us). Cheyenne is actually a corruption of the Sioux name for the tribe — Shahaiyena, meaning red talkers, or people of different language.



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soon and suddenly take our lives. As though without thought of doing it, I moved my right hand up to the lock of my gun.

The slender man talked on with his companions and sent four of them away. Soon we heard the tramp of horses; our horses called to them. The four men returned with two tongues and some liver and ribs of buffalo; they put fresh wood upon the fire; enlarged it, and began roasting the meat.

Turning to Black Elk and me, the slender man signed: 'You two, you have finished eating. Soon we shall eat.'

We made no reply to that. He and his men, some of them anyhow, had been watching us for some time, had seen us eating our evening meal. I wondered why they had not then killed us, what was really their object in pretending to be friendly to us.

'You two, you talk together with your hands, not with your mouths,' the slender man went on; and, pointing to Black Elk, 'Tell me, of what tribe are you?'

My friend hesitated, then swiftly, angrily, proudly signed back, 'I am a Crow!'

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‘You?’ the man signed to me.

‘Blackfeet!’

Surprised, he clapped hand to mouth. ‘The Blackfeet and the Crows have made peace?’ he asked.

‘No. My father, mother, and I came to the Crows, are living with them.’

‘Down on Rosebud River. We have seen their many lodges, watched their many hunters out after buffalo. We could have killed some of them, but they had not that which we seek.’

At that, one of the chief’s men said something to him, and, after some thought, he made answer. Then others spoke, argued with him. He silenced them, and signed to Black Elk: ‘You, Crow person, tell me: in this moon, have your hunters killed a white buffalo, a white cow?’

By the expression of their faces I saw that some of his men liked not his asking that question.

‘No,’ my friend answered.

‘Have not seen one?’

‘No.’

‘As Sun hears you, that is the truth?’

‘Yes, the truth.’

At that, the chief seemed to be pleased; he and

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several others smiled and talked together happily. The four at the fire finished broiling the tongues and other meat, and they all ate hungrily. Wolf had wedged himself in between Black Elk and me, and the chief tossed him a slice of rib meat; he drew back from it snarling, his back hair all fluffed forward. I patted him and he wagged tail, licked my cheek, and again angrily stared at the chief.

He laughed as he signed: 'Your wolf does not like me.'

'Nor do I like you,' I thought.

The twelve finished eating. One of the meat broilers brought water for the chief in a rawhide cup that was attached to the forks of a long willow cutting. He, and then the oldish man, drank from it, the while the others by twos and threes went to the creek and drank. The oldish man then filled and lighted a pipe, and started it the round of the circle. Again several of the party began arguing with the chief; spoke more and more loudly; but he never raised his voice, calmly made his replies. I suspected what it was all about; watched the pipe as it came from hand to hand ever nearer to me; watched it,

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yet pretended not to see it, the while my heart beat ever faster, so loud that I felt that all must hear it. At last the man next me on my right, received the pipe, slowly smoked, and I thought that he never would have done. Sweat broke out upon my forehead. I stared straight at the ground in front of me. Ha! At last, there was the long stem of the pipe between my eyes and my knees. Carelessly, as though it were something of no importance, I took it, drew through it, blew smoke to the four world directions, to Sun and Earth Mother, and then passed the pipe on to Black Elk, who drew from it three or four whiffs and quickly returned it. Breathing freely once more, with light heart, I passed it on and it went straight to the other end of the circle to be smoked another round. And I wanted to sing. I kept saying to myself: 'They passed us the pipe; we smoked with them; they are not going to kill us.'

Three times the oldish man refilled the pipe, and as it went again and again the round of our circle, the chief questioned me about my Blackfeet people; their location, their wars with other tribes, the condition of food animals in

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their country. He then began questioning Black Elk, but to nearly everything that he asked, my friend shortly signed that he did not know about it; and at last, with a queer smile, the chief gave it up and began talking with his men.

Then, when the fire was getting low, and several of his men were preparing to sleep, he signed to us: 'I told you once, and now I again say that we are not going to kill you two. But we cannot let you go home; you must go with us wherever we go. This night, nor any future night or day, do not try to leave us. So long as you do as I tell you to do, you will not be harmed by any of us. There. Do you fully understand me?'

'Yes,' I signed; but Black Elk only stared at him, and made no reply.

My friend and I lay down side by side, and Wolf curled up at my shoulder. The chief spoke to his men, and selected two of them for the first watch of the night; they took up their weapons and went out into the darkness, one toward the grazing horses, the other in the opposite direction. All of the others lay down. Little by little the fire died out, and when, at last, there was no longer any glow of the coals, my friend nudged



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me and pulled my arm, and we sat up. He moved then until he faced me, until our knees touched, and even then the night was so dark that each was but a dim shadow to the other. He drew my hands against his hands, and, by lightly touching them, following their movements, I was able to understand him.

‘These men here are Spotted Men,’ he began. ‘They wanted to learn if we had seen that they seek, a white buffalo, so did not kill us. They gave you and me their pipe to smoke. I know their thoughts. The Spotted People capture boys, girls, of all tribes with which they are at war; make them the same as their own children, so that their tribe may be many and strong. This chief here, we are his captives. Now, out here on the plains, we cannot escape. We have to go with him to his people, to his lodge. We will be watchful, and in some future night escape from him and return to our people.’

‘Yes,’ I signed.

‘I am a Crow. My father is a chief, a great chief. I am proud of it. I shall never be a Spotted Man,’ my friend went on.

‘As you say, so do I. Now, let us sleep,’ I

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signed back, and again we lay down side by side.

Day had not come when the two watchers of the party built a fire, and we were all of us soon up and broiling and eating meat. We then went out to the horses, saddled them, gave them water at the creek, and the chief signed to Black Elk and me to load our two pack-horses with the meat of the cow that we had killed. Sun was just coming in sight when we all got into our saddles and set off down the valley of the little creek, the chief in the lead. We noticed that he carried a seeing instrument. In those days but few of the people of the plains had such instruments. In my own Blackfeet tribe there were but two of them.

Sun was but a little way up in the blue when we arrived at the mouth of the little creek, crossed Tongue River, and went up onto the east rim of its valley and dismounted. There the chief got out his seeing instrument, one of four joints and great power, and with it looked long and carefully at each of the herds of buffalo that were in sight. And while he was doing that, the oldish man, who we now saw was a Sun man, got out his sacred pipe and prayed and smoked, un-

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doubtedly for discovery of the white buffalo, for during one of his songs, in which the others joined, he repeatedly made the sign for buffalo. We remained there for some time, and when others of the party were using the chief's seeing instrument, he had much sign talk with us. He said that the great camp of his people was well up toward the head of Powder River; that, ten days back, some of his people hunting west of that river had discovered a white cow in a herd of buffalo, but had been unable to overtake and kill it. On the following day all the hunters of the camp had gone out to look for the animal and failed to find it; and at that, the head chief of the camp had sent parties in all directions in quest of the white cow. He had with his little party looked over the herds of buffalo that the Crows were hunting on the Rosebud River; had looked for the white one in the herds up and down Tongue River; and now would examine the herds that we should find as we traveled east to Powder River, and then up it to the camp of his tribe. He asked me what the Blackfeet tribes did with a white buffalo, and I replied that the killer of one gave the meat to Sun, and, later, its

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well-tanned robe was sacrificed to Sun when the people built a great lodge for him. That, the chief replied, was just what his people did with a white buffalo.

Then, turning to Black Elk, he signed: 'I know that your Crow people also give to Sun the white buffalo that they kill.'

'Yes. I have seen my people give two white robes to Sun. White buffalo are very few,' he replied.

'True,' the other signed. 'I am of forty-five winters, and I have seen only three white buffalo. I have promised Sun that, if I can find and kill this one that I seek, I will give him of my body.'

We went on. Now and then a herd of buffalo fled from our approach. We rested upon every ridge, every butte that we topped, and first the chief and then some of his men examined the fresh herds that were in sight, failing always to find the white cow that they sought. As Sun was going down to his far-off lodge, we made camp on the shore of a small lake and broiled our evening meal before little fires of buffalo chips. The oldish man then got out his sacred pipe, and the others joined him in smoking and praying to Sun for

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help in their quest of the white cow. Dark night came. For a short time we sat around a dim fire of buffalo chips and twice the oldish man filled and passed his pipe. The chief then, as on the night before, named two men to go on watch, and we others all lay down and slept. Wolf hated, feared these men. In the middle of the night he wakened me by pressing closer to my shoulder and snufflingly growling at the watchers when they came in from the horses to arouse two other men to take their places.

Again, on the following morning, we ate very early, and then the chief had his men smother the fire, because, he signed to Black Elk and me, the odor of burning buffalo chips carried far and would frighten off any of the herds that might be coming in to drink. Even then we could hear from far the moaning grunting of bulls. At that, the chief gave an order to his men, and they began gathering sagebrush and piling it to form a small circle. Black Elk and I helped, and, when it was breast high, we all sat down within it, all but Wolf, who would not mix in with our captors. Now came day, and we saw three herds were approaching the lake; one from the south, another



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from the east, and a third one from the north. Smiling, the chief said something to his men, and signed to my friend and me: 'This is good. The wind is from the east; the coming herds will not smell us.' So anxious was he to discover the white one that his hands trembled as he got out his seeing instrument and looked through it at the nearest herd, the one to the south, and of not more than a hundred animals, calves and all. I saw my friend's lips rapidly working as he stared at the coming herds. He told me afterward that he was then praying that the chief nor any of the Spotted People should ever again so much as see the white cow that they sought.

Came first the south herd and then the north herd — also small — and plunged into the lake and drank, paying no attention to our grazing horses, and then came the east herd, of many hundreds; so many that the chief was a long time in making sure that the sacred cow was not among them.

Three wolves had followed the north herd in to water, and now, having drunk between it and us, they started to examine our horses, most likely thinking that they might find among them

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a colt that they could easily kill. Wolf had never, so far as I knew, paid any attention to those of his kind, other than sometimes answering their mournful howls, but now, as these three approached, he got up and with high tail walked out to meet them. His sudden appearance startled them; they ceased trotting, and stood and stared at him. He went on more slowly, and, when quite close, began circling past them, they turning about to watch what he would do. Suddenly, all three raised their heads and sniffed the air; and then the east wind gave them full scent of Wolf and they turned and fled from him as fast as they could run, he standing and staring at them, his mouth wide open, tail drooping; and so foolish was his appearance that we all laughed. He heard us and, I am sure, understood that we laughed at him; with drooping head and sideway glances at the brush within which we sat, he came sneaking back and lay down where he knew that he was close to me.

Signed the chief: 'Your wolf's brothers, they got not only scent of him, but scent of you that he has always in his hair: so was it that they had great fear of him.'

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‘Yes,’ I replied. ‘I am glad of it. Never will his kind make friends with him and so get him to leave me.’

‘Not so,’ the oldish man signed. ‘He is still young. With the coming of next summer, when the wolves-take-wives time comes, he will leave you.’

‘Will leave me not!’ I angrily signed.

To that, the man made no answer; he only smiled and turned his back to me.

The chief spoke to his men, and signed to us two: ‘We will saddle our horses, and go on.’

We all gathered up our weapons and stepped from the circle of brush. The near buffalo saw us and ran; all the others took fright. The south herd and the north herd merged with the east herd, and off they went with thunder of hooves, off north to the top of a low ridge and over it out of sight.

All that day we rode on eastward, stopping upon ridge after ridge and butte after butte, to examine the herds of buffalo that were in sight, but in none of them was there one of white color. We made camp that night on Powder River, and the next day went up it, crossing and recrossing

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it, and from the rims of its valley examining the herds upon the plain. It was a rich country; never had I seen elsewhere so many herds of buffalo as were there; and in the river valley were great numbers of elk and deer; real bears, too, some of them of great size; and generally of very light-colored fur.

When we made camp, that evening, the chief and his men were, as Black Elk and I could plainly see, very low-hearted. They spoke but little while broiling and eating slices of the meat which we furnished them. Later on, the oldish man got out his sacred pipe outfit, and they all joined him in smoking, praying, and singing to the Above Ones to give them success in their quest of the white buffalo. Their last song was a song of the wolf; for during the singing they frequently made the sign for wolf, the while the oldish man howled; and every time he did that, my wolf sat up and howled, until, at last, wolves around us, near and far, howled in answer to him. At that, the oldish man signed to the others to cease singing. They all sat motionless, smiling, listening to the howling until it ceased; then the oldish man put away his pipe, and placed it in

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the bundle of sacred skins of animals and birds in which it was carried.

He then signed to me: 'The wolf is a very powerful animal; very close to Sun.'

'Yes,' I answered. 'I, my Blackfeet people, we think the wolf is the best hunter of all the meat-eaters. We have a wolf song; before going out to hunt we sing it.' And with that, I sang the song, just once, and those Spotted Men carefully listened, signing that it was a good song.

The chief then signed: 'You would not be sitting here with us but for your wolf. That night when we discovered you, back at that little creek, I told my men that we should sneak up close to your fire and kill you both. And then I saw that you had a wolf; a gentle wolf; a Sun animal. I knew that we must not kill you; that we must be friendly to you. I told my men just what to do. So was it that we closed in on you, took your gun, your bows, and then gave them back to you.'

Now that surprised us. I think that I trembled a little. I looked at Wolf and so did Black Elk: but for him these Spotted Men would now be carrying our scalps. I could not help but sign to the chief: 'You, your men, good your hearts.'



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And then Black Elk quickly, strongly signed to the chief: 'You say that you are our friend. Back in our camp, our mothers, our fathers, are mourning for us, are thinking that we are dead. Chief, let us go to them and wipe away their tears. Chief, as you love your own children, let us go.'

At that, the chief suddenly dropped his head and stared at the ground. I noticed that his men looked not at him. Sad was his face when he at last replied: 'One more day we look for the white buffalo. Near night, we shall arrive at our Spotted People's many lodges. You two shall rest in my lodge. There. I shall now say no more about this. Later on — later on — later on you shall know my heart.'

At that, Black Elk angrily stared at him, but he turned his face from us and began at once talking with his men. Myself, I could not somehow feel angry at him. I felt that he really liked us, and would soon let us return to our people. Of one thing I was sure: he was not going to harm us. On the next day we did not look very long for the white buffalo. Sun was no more than half-way up to the middle of the blue, when, again

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topping the east rim of the valley, we saw, off to the south, a large herd of buffalo on the run, pursued by a number of riders. We then all dismounted, and the chief got out his seeing instrument and looked through it at the riders, who by that time had given up the chase and were turning back to their kills to butcher them. He looked at them but a short time, and, laying his seeing instrument across his lap, spoke shortly to his men; and then signed to us two: 'They out there are from my camp. Our search for the white one ends.'

Remounting our horses, we went on. The buffalo runners discovered us, thought that we might be an enemy war party, and got together on their horses. The chief and several others of our party began making the peace sign, and also the sign for the Spotted People, and the hunters soon came on and met us. There followed quick talk between the chief and one of them, who — and his companions too — looked curiously at Black Elk and me, although they pretended not to see us. Then the men of both parties talked with one another. But they did not talk as would parties of my own people have talked upon

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meeting in that way. There was no joking, no laughing; not one of them so much as smiled; and I felt that the hunters were telling of some great misfortune that had come to the Spotted People tribe. We soon parted from them, they returning to their twenty and more kills of buffalo, we going on again to follow up the valley of the river.

Presently the chief signed to me: 'Those buffalo runners, they told us which that makes our hearts sick: the white men have killed more of my Spotted People. Very bad are the white men: they come more and more of them; they take more and more of our plains; kill off our buffalo, our antelope. I hate them.'

'Yes,' I signed. I did not know what more to say. I saw that his eyes were wet, his face, oh, so sad.

'My sons, two, good, brave, one winter back, the white men killed them. I have no children,' he went on. Truly, I had pity for him, enemy though he was.

And then, after a time, he gave us more news: 'The white buffalo,' he signed. 'Many parties of my people have been out looking for it, ridden far, and found it not.'

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'I think, maybe, my Crow people have killed it,' Black Elk signed.

'Maybe so,' the chief replied.

After Sun had passed the middle, we met more and more parties of Spotted People hunters going out after buffalo, and passed others that were slowly going homeward, their pack-horses heavily loaded with meat and hides. And then, at last, we entered a long wide bottom of the valley, and there at its upper end was the Spotted People's camp; a circle of several hundred lodges. At sight of it, of the many people going to and fro, great fear came within me. Though the chief, I thought, meant well by me, and Black Elk too, surely there were among so many of his kind some who would soon put an end to us. Ha! My heart was low as we rode up that grassy bottom. 'Haiyu, Sun!' I silently prayed. 'Here, in the midst of these always-enemies of my kind, help me! Help me to live on!'

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAMP OF THE SPOTTED PEOPLE

Now, though great fear was within me as we approached this camp of the Spotted People, still were my eyes quick to notice several things about it. As in camps of my own people, the entrance way of the circle was in its east side; but in this camp there were no Sun priests' painted lodges, save two, each painted black below and red above, and they were apart from the other lodges, both in the southern part of the big grassy clear space within the belt of the camp. We passed through the entrance, and our party separated, Black Elk and I following the chief across the circle, and passing many people, who gave him greeting, but looked unsmilingly, curiously, at us.

The chief led us to a large lodge on the west side of the circle, and, as we got down from our horses, two women came out, fine-appearing women, well-dressed, hair smoothly braided. At first their eyes were all for him; glad eyes as one



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after the other they embraced him. He spoke to them, and they looked at us and smiled as they said something which we took for words of greeting. 'My women,' the chief signed. Came running a youth of our own age. 'My brother; named Lone Antelope; he will care for our horses,' the chief went on.

The youth looked at us, stared at my gun, turned and looked at our horses, questioned the chief, who answered shortly, and then signed to us that we were to enter the lodge. We followed him in, and he motioned us to sit upon a couch that was to the right of his own couch at the back of the lodge. It was a very large lodge, with a complete leather lining that was painted with his *coups*. We quickly looked them over, and knew that he was a great warrior. The lodge was well-furnished and neatly kept.

The two women came in with our saddles and piled them at one side of the doorway; they then rebuilt the fire, got out some dry meat, broiled it, and set it before us, all the time talking with their man.

Then, when we had finished eating, he signed to us: 'Maybe you would like to go out into the

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timber; maybe you would like to go to the river and swim. Do as you will about it.'

That was just what we were wanting to do: go where none could see us sign-talking to each other.

We took up our weapons, were getting upon our feet, when the chief went on: 'Your gun, your bows, leave them here. Go out where you will, let my people know that you do not fear them; so shall I be proud of you.'

We dropped back upon the couch and looked at one another. 'I am not afraid,' I signed to Black Elk.

'I the same,' he answered, and we laid aside the weapons and left the lodge, turned about, and wended our way past the ten or twelve lodges back of the chief's lodge. Some of the people around them scowled at us; others smiled; still others pretended that they did not see us. We entered the narrow strip of timber there bordering the river, came to a stand, and made sure that no one was within sight of us. Black Elk signed: 'We cannot now leave here; we should be seen, overtaken, killed. I think that he who holds us is anyhow going to kill us.'

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'No. My thought is, he wants to have us live with him,' I answered.

'To-night we shall not try to escape: he, his women, will be watching us.'

'Yes, they will watch us. Now, see, this is my thought,' I signed. 'This chief wants us to live with him, wants to make us two of his fighting followers. We must pretend that we are glad to be with him; glad to do all that he tells us to do. So shall we, some not-far-off night, leave him and return to our people.'

'Yes. And we will take with us many of these Spotted People's horses; our own horses, too. Now, let us stay out here a little time and see if we are being watched.'

I agreed to that. We went on to the river, bathed, recombined and braided our hair. Wolf, who swam with us, shook himself many times, and licked his fur. We moved back into the timber and sat there, talking of many things, planning how, in some night to come, we would take a large band of the horses of the Spotted People, and, traveling night and day and night and day with never a stop, proudly drive them into the camp of the Crows. None came near us. Sun

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went down behind the mountains. With Wolf at our heels, we returned to the lodge of our captor. As we entered it, he and his women looked up at us, smiling, nodding their heads. We saw that, during our absence, two new couches — complete with back-rests — had been put up, couches of soft tanned buffalo robes on top of thick layers of dry grass; and upon the one on the north side of the lodge were my weapons, and on the other, at the south side, was Black Elk's bow-and-arrows case.

Pointing to the couches, the chief signed to us: 'Yours; your couches; my women give them to you. Be seated; you two, here with us, let your hearts be glad.'

We went to the couches. Smiling more than ever, one of the women signed to us: 'We went to our mother, to our other relatives, and got these robes, these back-rests for you.'

Signed the other one: 'You two, here with us, we want you to be well-dressed; we give you some things.'

And at that, the chief's sits-beside-him woman handed me a pair of new deer-leather leggings, a blue cloth shirt with white buttons, and a pair of

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quill-embroidered moccasins; and at the same time the other woman gave Black Elk like presents. We needed them; our moccasins were worn out, our leggins old and soiled. The women were good to us; we signed to them that they were. And now, of one thing we were sure: this chief wanted us with him; he would protect us from those of his people who might want to end our lives. Yes, we were safe where we were, and on some not-far-off night we should surely escape and rejoin our people.

We laid aside our presents, to put them on in the morning. The chief signed us that his women wanted meat, so, on the next day, we should all three of us go out after buffalo. I replied that we should be glad to go with him.

Came in then four men, and Black Elk and I made room for them upon our couches. The chief filled, lighted, and passed his pipe, and there followed much talk, which, of course, we did not understand. Then, after a time, these visitors questioned us, me mostly, about my own people, our country, and the tribes to the north and the west of it. One of the men was so swift with his signs that I several times



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had to get him to repeat them, and more slowly.

It was quite late when the visitors left. Then, as we were all about to lie down and sleep, we heard much loud talking on the other side of the camp circle. The chief went out and was gone for some time. Returning, he signed to us: 'Here have arrived six riders, Big Bellies. They say that their whole tribe will arrive to-morrow.'

'Good! Good! The Big Bellies and my Blackfeet people are real friends,' I signed. 'Long ago — very long ago, maybe a hundred, two hundred winters back — my people took pity on them, told them that our country was also their country, to live in, travel in, hunt in as they would. Only this last winter they camped with us on North Big River, where is the trading house of the North white men.'

Signed the chief: 'No. These who arrive to-morrow are South Big Bellies, brothers of your Big Bellies. Long have they and my Spotted People been close friends.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Big Bellies to which the chief referred were the Arapahoes, brother tribe of the Gros Ventres of the Prairie, long one of the tribes of the great Blackfeet Confederacy. Parting from the Gros Ventres, or, as the Blackfeet name them, the Utsena (Entrails People), the Arapahoes moved south and east early in the eight-

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Of course. I was crazy to have thought that they who were coming were the friends, the allies, of my people, of all our Blackfeet tribes. I had heard much about them; long had they had been separated from the North Big Bellies. Yet they remained friends. I had once seen a few men of the South tribe in the camp of our ally.

Signed the chief: 'Some of these who are coming are my close friends. I have to give them feasts, smokes; we shall not go out for buffalo tomorrow. Now, let us sleep.'

On the following morning, the chief's young brother, Lone Antelope, came in, shared with us our early meal, and then the chief signed that Black Elk and I should take our weapons and go with the young man to bring in the horses.

'It is good that you two are to go with me. You and I are, I think, to be friends,' he signed.

'Yes,' we signed.

He led us across the river and up onto the rim of the plain, trying, as we went, to make friends with Wolf, who would not go near him. We did

eenth century, and became closely allied with the Cheyennes and certain tribes of the Sioux, all of them bitter enemies of the Crows and also of the Blackfeet tribes.

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not know that we ourselves wanted to be friends with him. He signed to us to see how many were the horses of his people. Truly, they were many: all up and down the valley of the river, and upon the plain on each side of it, band after band of the animals; bands of many heads; the greater number of them spotted horses, beautiful, and fat. A little way out upon the plain, we came upon the chief's band, all of a hundred head, and tied to four of them, neck and neck, were our four animals. There were also five large mules in the band, and those, Lone Antelope told us, his brother had captured from white soldiers during a fight with them, somewhere to the south.

‘In that fight,’ he went on, ‘killed were my two uncles. Bad, very bad are the white soldiers. I pray Sun to destroy them all. You two, do you not also hate them?’

‘We Crows, we do not know, do not see them,’ Black Elk answered.

‘In my country, where join together South Big River and Elk River, are white soldiers. They come not to trouble us, we go not to trouble them,’ signed I.

Lone Antelope blew out a deep breath. ‘Soon

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those white ones will try to take your country, just as they are trying to take our country: you will fight them,' he signed.

I did not believe that that would ever happen. How could I know that, but a few winters hence, those soldiers would destroy a whole camp of our brother tribe, the Pikuni? <sup>1</sup>

'Your brother, the chief, what is his name?' I asked.

'Otter Head. His sits-beside-him woman, her name is Lance Woman. His other woman is Good Singer. They like you; they like you both,' he signed.

We drove the horses down to the river, watered them, and left them to graze back up onto the plain, excepting one that Lone Antelope caught for his brother to ride. Going back into camp, we saw that many of the men were already dressed in their war clothes, ready to go out to meet their friends the Big Bellies. The chief, our captor, Otter Head, had on fine bighorn leather

<sup>1</sup> On January, 1, 1870, on the Marias River, about eighty miles north of Fort Benton, Montana, United States troops, under Colonel Baker, massacred a friendly camp of about four hundred Pikuni, men, women, and children. It is one of the darkest chapters in the history of our dealings with the Indians.

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shirt and leggings, beautifully embroidered with colored quills, and fringed with white weasel skins and enemy scalps. He was surprised when he saw that we had brought in but one horse; spoke sternly to his brother, and then signed to Black Elk and me: 'This day, when our true friends, the Big Bellies, are coming, is a great day, a happy day for us. I want you to be happy with us; go back to our band and catch each of you a horse. I want you also to ride to meet them.'

We did as we were told, and, after saddling the animals, sat with the chief outside his lodge. All of the people of the camp had their eyes upon three men, who, with their horses, were standing at the edge of the west-side plain. After a time they turned about and looked down at us and waved their robes: they had sighted the Big Bellies; they were near. At that, we all got upon our horses, and Otter Head signed Black Elk and me to follow Lone Antelope; that he himself would join his band of fighting men. We rode up the steep slope of the valley, and, looking out over the plain, saw the approaching long caravan of the other tribe. Here the different warrior bands



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of the Spotted People formed in line, seven bands in all, Otter Head leading one of them, which we afterward learned was the Bull band of the society. They numbered about one hundred, mostly oldish men, so we knew that our captor must have counted a great many *coups* in order to become their leader. They all carried red shields, some of them having a center black painting of a bull's head, others a center ornament of a bull's tail. Two long black painted lances, ornamented with bunches of raven tail-feathers, belonged to this band, and were carried by the two men riding next behind the chief. Each member of this band had a cap made of the head, skin, and horns of a buffalo bull, which he wore when the band gathered together for a ceremonial dance. Whenever camp was to be moved on the following morning, the two lances were stuck into the ground in front of Otter Head's lodge, not straight up, but slanting in the direction that the people were to go; but if the lances were stuck straight up, they indicated that the camp was to remain where it was until further notice.

With many other youths we three rode a little

## The Camp of the Spotted People

to the right of the long column of the warrior bands. Soon they stopped, and sang, in time to the beating of their drums, a song of greeting to the advancing warrior bands of the Big Bellies. Then, presently, the latter came to a halt and sang, while the Spotted People bands moved forward. And so, alternately halting and singing and moving forward, the two columns at last came together, and friends greeted friends, leaning out from their horses and embracing one another. The Spotted People warriors then turned about and escorted the others down to camp, to entertain them while their women were making their own camp at the lower end of the big bottom.

A little later, when Black Elk, Lone Antelope, and I returned to Otter Head's lodge, we found him entertaining four of the newcomers, men of fine appearance and well-dressed; speaking sometimes their own language and again the language of the Spotted People; truly, I thought, the two tribes were friends for many, many winters back, that they should speak equally well the two very different languages.

I noticed that the visitors looked often at

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Black Elk and me, and so knew that the chief had been telling them about his capturing us; that made me feel angry and ashamed. Presently the one who sat next to the chief on his right said something to him, and, as he replied, he looked and pointed to me.

Said the man then, in my own language: 'Youth, your father, what is his name?'

So surprised was I that I nearly fell over backward; my heart seemed to start beating up in my throat; I felt trembly. My questioner, his companions, the chief, and his women were all of them smiling as they looked at me.

Somehow, afraid-voiced, I answered: 'Named Many Swans.'

'Ah! Many Swans! He who always goes alone to war. I have met him. In the camp of the Pikuni, once, I smoked with him.'

Still was I so surprised that I could not speak. The man went on talking to me in my very own language, and at the same time using the sign language, so that the others there would understand.

'Long ago, with my father and mother and other relatives, I visited our brother tribe, the

## The Camp of the Spotted People

North Big Bellies,' he said. 'Two winters we remained with them, and during all that time we all camped side by side with the Pikuni, hunted with them, traveled with them. So was it that I saw much of your country, as far north as Belly River, and from the Lakes Inside out past the Sweetgrass Hills as far east as the Divided Hills. Yes. Also have I camped in your Bear Paw Mountains, your Wolf Mountains, and along your Big River to the south of them.'

Ha! As he mentioned those mountains and those rivers, one by one, how I wished that, with my father and mother, I were back there, safe with my own tribe in my own country.

Now again Otter Head and this speaker of my language had some talk together, and then the latter said to me: 'Your friend Otter Head would like to know, and so would I, just how it is that you, and, as he tells me, your father and mother too, came to live with the Crows, enemies of you Blackfeet and your brother tribes.'

At that, I took heart. I was suddenly glad to speak my own language to one who understood it. I told how my father, because of something he had done that caused him great unrest, had de-

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cided that we must leave our own people and go to live with the Crows. I told of our fight with the Crees at Arrow River; and of how, finding the Crow camp on Bighorn River, we had in the night set up our lodge close to it, and on the following morning been visited and welcomed by the great Crow chief, Dusty Bull, whose son was there beside me.

‘Ha! So this youth is the son of that Dusty Bull, man of fierce heart! I cannot understand how it was that he welcomed, instead of killing, you and your father.’

‘My father is a Sun priest; he has the powerful buffalo sacred lodge,’ I explained.

‘Ha! That explains it; because of that, the Crows made friends with him. When I was with the Pikuni, I heard much about that buffalo medicine, its great power. It was then owned by a man of your other brother tribe, the Bloods; by one named Eagle Ribs.’

‘Yes. From him my father got it.’

‘Your Crow friend here, what is his name?’

‘Black Elk.’

At that, the man signed Black Elk to give my name. He told it.



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‘Ah! Now this I say to you two: I am glad that I have met you here this day. I have much to talk over with my friend here, Otter Head. To-morrow, when Sun goes down from sight, come to my lodge, you two and Otter Head, and smoke with me. There is that that I have to say to you.’

‘Yes. We will do as you ask,’ I replied.

A long time this man and his companions talked with Otter Head, and when, at last, they left us, the latter signed to Black Elk and me: ‘He who talked with you, he who speaks the Blackfeet language, is a great chief of the South Big Bellies. It is good that he likes you two. His name is Morning Eagle.’

Well, for this man who spoke my language, who was almost the same as a man of the North Big Bellies, close friends of my people, I had sudden and great liking. I felt that I could hardly wait for the setting of next day’s Sun, to go to his lodge and again talk with him.

Day was barely come when Lance Woman and Good Singer got up, built a fire, and began preparing our morning meal. With Otter Head, Black Elk and I went to the river and bathed.

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Then, after eating, we two went with Lone Antelope and brought in the horses, and, as we were on this day to go out after meat, we drove the whole herd into camp, so that the chief and his women could select the ones that they were to use. They were awaiting our coming, and, when we had brought the band to a stand before them, Otter Head signed: 'You, Bear Plume, and you, Black Elk. Now, on this good day, my women and I are going to give you horses. Look well at those that are to be yours, so that you will always know them.'

We could hardly believe that we rightly understood his sign talk; we looked at each other, at him and his women, our mouths wide open, our eyes very big.

Then, smiling, but with eyes a little wet, Lance Woman signed: 'My sister and I, we like you two! As were our sons to us, so are you now to us. We love you. We do not want you to be poor; so it is that we now give you horses on which to hunt and ride about as you will.'

'Yes. Truth, that she told you. Come, now, and we will point out those that are to be yours,' signed the chief.

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We all went in among the horses, and the chief pointed out a big pinto, which he gave to Black Elk, and then selected another one for me. Then Good Singer gave Black Elk two animals, her very own, she signed; and last, Lance Woman gave me a big gray and a beautiful black-and-white pinto. I signed to her that she was very generous.

Signed the chief: 'It was my thought to go with you after meat, but now have come the Big Bellies and I must visit with them. So go, you three, and try to get fat meat.'

We saddled, each of us, Black Elk, Lone Antelope, and I, a trained runner, and, mounting, joined a number of hunters who were setting out for a large herd of buffalo that had, the previous evening, been seen heading toward the river at some distance below camp. Sun was well up toward the middle when scouts who had been sent on ahead rejoined our party and said that the big herd was in a long wide bottom of the valley just below, and on the east side of the river. There followed some talk between the older men of our party, which Black Elk and I did not understand, but, when it ended and we

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all started on, Lone Antelope signed to us to remain close to him and we should make a good killing.

So was it that, when we arrived opposite the bottom in which the buffalo were resting, we three remained — with ten or twelve other hunters — in a strip of willows bordering the river, and the others, separating into two parties, left us and crossed over to the other side of the stream, well above and below the herd. We could not see the animals, as they were hidden from us by a grove of cottonwoods on the opposite shore. Lone Antelope signed to us that the two parties were to surround and attack the herd on three sides, and then our party was to attack and drive it back when it sought escape by crossing the river.

After a long wait, we heard a shot and knew that the attack had begun; a few more shots followed, then the thunder of hooves. Our horses heard it and began to prance and paw the ground, so anxious were they to join the chase. Above the trees across from us rose a cloud of dust; the thunder of hooves, so loud at first, was becoming fainter and fainter, and we feared that



A BUFFALO HUNT





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the herd had broken through the circle and was heading up onto the plain. We were all about to cross the river, our hope of making a killing gone, when one of our party shouted something, and Lone Antelope signed: 'They have turned the herd; it is coming.'

Sure enough, the thunder of hooves was growing louder; and soon, with great crashing of brush and dead sticks, a small part of the herd, forty or fifty animals, came through the grove and splashed into the shallow river. We learned afterward that the hunters on the other side had so closely pressed the big herd that it had split into three bands, one going up onto the plain, one down the valley, and the other toward us; but for all that they made a good killing of the animals.

When the small band of cows broke through the timber and into the river, we all charged out to meet them, but, as though they did not see us, they kept coming, with great splashing of the water, and we all turned about and rode with them out across the bottom, each of us intent upon making a good killing. I was not using my gun: the bow was a better, quicker weapon for

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the chase. I shot an arrow deep into the lungs of a fat cow, saw her red blood gush from mouth and nose, and knew that she was finished. I then went after a fat two-winters cow, and, just as I was getting up beside her, she turned short off to the right, close past my horse's nose, and went off down the bottom. Almost I went to the ground, so suddenly did my horse turn after her. She was the swiftest cow that I had ever chased, but I felt that I must have her. Little by little I gained upon her, and at last, at the very end of the long bottom, let go an arrow deep into her side, just as she again was turning suddenly to the right. The arrow pierced her heart; down she fell and with a few kicks and jerks of her feet was dead. I looked up the bottom: the chase was over; the survivors of the little herd were just topping the rim of the valley; the other hunters upon their winded horses were turning back to butcher their kills. I decided that I would first butcher the big cow that I had killed, and then return to this smaller one.

As I neared the line of the chase, Black Elk and Lone Antelope, standing beside one of their kills, signed me to join them, and I learned that

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they had each killed two cows, and that few of the other hunters had killed more than one each.

‘Our six kills are much meat, but the women will soon be here with enough horses to carry all of it, so let us hurry with our skinning and cutting,’ Lone Antelope signed.

We had not understood that the women were to follow us.

‘You and I, let us first butcher your kill down below,’ Black Elk signed to me.

‘Yes. Do that, you two, and I will here soon have women to help,’ Lone Antelope signed.

We hurried to the lower end of the bottom, got out of the saddle, sat down beside my kill, where, at last, we could talk to each other without being seen.

‘These Spotted People, these dog people — let us, to-night, take many of their horses and return to our camp,’ my friend quickly signed.

‘I do not call them dogs; they are of good hearts; they are good to us. Think of all that they have given us: fine clothing; thick couches; and, this morning, each of us five horses,’ I answered.

‘They give because they want us to help them

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fight their many enemies; they want us to turn against our own people.'

'We do not have to fight them. I should like to remain for a time with Otter Head and his good women; visit with this newcomer, Morning Eagle, and his Big Bellies people. These two tribes, I should like to know their hearts, their ways of life.'

'Down there on Rosebud River, our fathers and mothers are mourning for us; they think that we are dead ——'

'Enough have you said: we will leave to-night.'

'Good! We will take with us many horses!'

'No, only those that are our own. These people have been good to us; we have smoked with them; they have given us many presents; we will take not one of their horses!'

That did not please Black Elk; very angrily he looked at me; but at last signed: 'As you say!'



## CHAPTER VIII

### NEWS OF THE WHITE COW

BLACK ELK and I quickly skinned the young cow, and, while cutting the carcass into suitable pieces for packing, we saw many women and some old men ride into the bottom, driving and leading plenty of horses on which to pack the meat of our kills. The most of the party turned off across the river, and of those who remained on our side were Lance Woman, Good Singer, and Lone Antelope's mother.

Leading a pack-horse, singing happily, Lance Woman came on to us and dismounted. 'Good meat! Fat meat that!' she signed, pointing to my kill. 'I hear that our two sons killed four cows. I am pleased. There will be plenty of meat for us, and some for those who have no hunting men or sons.'

Black Elk made no answer to that. She pretended that she did not notice his angry eyes, his tight-closed lips, and just smiled at him and at me.

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‘Did any of the poor come with you?’ I asked.

‘Yes. We will take of this kill only the tongue and *bosse* ribs. I will tell two widows, up there, to take the rest,’ she answered.

I loaded her selections on her pack-horse, and we went up to our other kills, where she told the two women that the remainder of the young cow was theirs, that I gave it to them. That made their hearts glad; they signed that they prayed Sun to protect me, give me long life. So was my own heart made glad.

‘And you, my son, will you not give of your kills to the poor? See, here are other women who have none to hunt for them,’ Good Singer signed to Black Elk.

‘My kills, I don’t want them. Do as you will with them. Give them to the dogs if you want to,’ he scowlingly signed.

Sadly then Good Singer looked at him, and after a little went and put an arm around him, kissed him, smoothed his hair, and signed: ‘Why so angry-hearted? As though you were my real son, I love you. As was my son to me, he the white soldiers killed, so now are you. Do not hurt me; make glad my heart.’

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At that, Black Elk bent his head, turned from us; and after a little he turned again; and wet were his eyes as he signed to her: 'I am not angry at you. Give my two cows to the poor. I am ashamed that I said to give them to the dogs.'

'Good! Good! Take us to your kills,' she signed, and they went off to them, followed by three or four old women and men.

For a share of the meat other women helped Lance Woman and me butcher my two kills, while some of the old men sat by, smoking, talking, and now and then breaking out into song. Nothing makes us plains people so happy as plenty of meat in sight. The whites are content with their flour and beans, rice and pork, potatoes and corn, but with us, meat is the one, the only food.

Soon the hunters who had rounded up the herd on the other side of the river began coming over, the pack-horses that their women had brought them all heavily loaded with meat, and we all lined in with them upon the homeward way. Not one of them gave Black Elk and me other than friendly smiles; and, when Lance Woman and Good Singer told one and another of them

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that their new sons had each made two fat cow kills, they signed to us that we were real hunters. Arrived in camp, Otter Head also gave us much praise for our success. Wolf, whom I had left tied in the lodge, went almost crazy when he saw me, jumped upon me and licked my face again and again when I freed him. His leash was a rope of braided horsetail hair; rawhide ropes he bit in two as quickly as I tied him with them.

‘Come. It is time for us to go to the lodge of our Big Bellies friend,’ signed Otter Head.

‘Myself, I do not want to go,’ Black Elk replied.

‘No; you must go. In the lodge of our friend you are to get a big surprise; something that will make glad your heart.’

Black Elk made no reply to that, but got up and followed us when we started for the other camp. I wondered what the big surprise could be.

This camp of the South Big Bellies numbered about two hundred lodges; some of them, like the lodges of our Blackfeet tribes, painted with the medicine symbols of their Sun priest owners. One of them even had upon it the symbols of the

## News of the White Cow

water medicine: at the bottom, a red-and-black band of circles — day and night; at the top seven blue stars; and between the two a band of four otters, in black. I said to myself: 'How can this be? In the very-long-ago were these people and my people so friendly that they exchanged with one another their sacred medicines? If so, which of them first had this water-medicine?' I felt very uneasy about it.

The lodge of Morning Eagle was a very large one and was well-furnished. He smiled when we entered, and said to me in my own language: 'Welcome, youth of the Blackfeet, friend of my North relatives, and also my friend.'

'Ah! I am glad to come into your lodge,' I replied.

He had the three of us sit upon an unoccupied couch, the one next to his couch on his left. Upon one of the couches opposite us, the first couch on his right, were his two women; as he filled a pipe for us, they hung a big kettle of meat upon a tripod over the fire. Came in then a good-looking man of about thirty winters, and a woman, tall, slender, gray-haired, of pleasant face and well-dressed. They seated themselves upon the



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couch first at the left of the doorway, and the woman spoke to our host and he replied shortly, pointing at the same time to Black Elk. At that, the woman addressed Black Elk in his own language, and at her very first word he was as startled, as surprised, as I had been upon hearing my own language from the lips of the South Big Bellies chief. Otter Head and Morning Eagle clapped their hands and laughed and so did the women. The younger man, smiling, also spoke to Black Elk in Crow language and still more startled him. But he soon answered them, questioned them, and then the talk of the three was like the buzzing of a flight of bees.

Said Morning Eagle to me: 'That Crow woman, now a widow, was long ago captured by one of our tribe. The man beside her, named Fish Robe, is her son, her half-blood son.'

'The woman, doesn't she want to return to her own people? And her son, which way is his heart?' I asked.

'She is at heart one with us, has been so ever since her son was born. And he, ha! One winter back he killed one of a party of Crows who tried one night to get away with some of our horses.'

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The women of the lodge now set before us the meat that they had boiled, some back fat and dried camas, a good little feast. While we were eating, and afterward while the pipe went the round of our circle, Black Elk excitedly talked with the Crow woman and her son; and quietly Otter Head and Morning Eagle questioned me, and told me of their troubles with the white men, much that made me truly low of heart. They said that they, with several tribes of Parted Hairs,<sup>1</sup> owned a vast country of plains and mountains that the whites were gradually taking from them; they had made treaty after treaty with the whites, and always the whites had broken them. Only two winters back, the whites had asked them to make another treaty of peace, and they had gathered at Sand Creek, in the southern part of their country, for that purpose. Then, one morning, just as day was coming, and for no cause whatever, the white soldiers had attacked their camp and killed five hundred of its members, many of them women and children. Several of those who escaped from the camp had seen a

<sup>1</sup> The Blackfeet name for the Sioux tribes is Kaispa (Parted Hair).

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soldier chief kill and scalp three women and five children.<sup>1</sup> One of their close friends, a Spotted People chief named White Antelope, had refused to run off with them; he ceased fighting, and stood still, singing his death song until a soldier shot him. His song was a short one: 'Only the plains and the mountains live long.'

After this terrible killing of their people, these chiefs went on to tell me, the whites had asked them to make another treaty with them, and they had done so; never had they refused to make a treaty. In this new one it was agreed that all of the plains from some little mountains, called Black Mountains, west to the Real Mountains, and north to Elk River,<sup>2</sup> was owned wholly by the Spotted People, South Big Bellies, and Parted Hairs, and that within it the whites were not to settle nor even hunt. And now that treaty had been broken: the whites were not only travel-

<sup>1</sup> This was the massacre of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on Sand Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River, November 29, 1864. The officer who murdered the three women and five children was Lieutenant Richmond, of the Third Colorado Cavalry. For a full account of this massacre, see Dr. George Bird Grinnell's interesting volume, *The Fighting Cheyennes*.

<sup>2</sup> The Black Hills, Rocky Mountains, and Yellowstone River.

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ing and hunting in it, but were right then building soldiers' houses up on Sweet Pine Creek,<sup>1</sup> one of the heads of Powder River, and not two days' ride from us. That, they said, could not be allowed. They had sent messengers to the Parted Hairs, asking them to come and help kill off those soldiers and burn their houses. This just had to be done, else soon they would have no buffalo and no country in which even to lie down and die.

And how many were the people of the Black-foot tribes? they asked. After some thought, I said that they numbered about nine hundred lodges, and our friends, the North Big Bellies, and the Saksis, about two hundred lodges. And in answer to their further questions, I said, as I had before, that there were no soldiers in our country except a few at the mouth of Elk River. Of other white men, there were, in the far north, on Bow River, some redcoat traders, and on South Big River, the Many Houses of the Big Knives traders. Farther up Big River, at the foot of the Real Mountains, quite a large number

<sup>1</sup> This was Fort Phil Kearny, built on Piney Creek, a tributary of Powder River, in the summer of 1866.

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of whites were digging out yellow metal that they found there.<sup>1</sup>

Now, when I mentioned the yellow-metal diggers, both chiefs clapped hands to mouths to express their surprise, and Otter Head said to me, through Morning Eagle: 'The chiefs of your tribes must be crazy that they allow that digging. More than horses, more than buffalo hides and furs, do the whites love yellow metal. If your tribes do not soon kill off those diggers already there, more and more of them will come; multitudes of whites will come and take from you your whole country.'

Said Morning Eagle: 'If you should go to the chiefs of your tribes and tell them what the whites have done, and are doing to us, and of their own danger from the yellow-metal diggers, is it not likely that they would join us in one great stand to keep our hunting country to ourselves?'

'You said just now that the Parted Hair tribes are your friends, and that you have sent for them to help you fight the whites.'

<sup>1</sup> These places were respectively: Calgary, Province of Alberta, Canada; Fort Benton, Montana; and Helena, Montana, where, at the time, rich placer mines were being extensively worked.



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‘Yes. They are our friends; they are one with us.’

‘Then never will my people come to your aid; of all our enemies, we hate most the Parted Hair tribes. Never, so long as Sun makes his daily journey across the blue, will my people do other than fight them,’ I replied.

‘Too bad! Too bad that they are so fierce against them. Well, we must do the best that we can without their help,’ said Otter Head.

‘Here are the Crows, two tribes of many warriors each; why don’t you make peace with them, get them to help fight the whites?’ I asked.

Both grimly shook their heads, and Otter Head replied: ‘As your tribes hate the Parted Hairs, so do we hate the Crows. Never, never shall we do other than fight them whenever we meet.’

Further talk we had, about many things; and when, at last, Otter Head said that it was time for us to go, Black Elk was reluctant to leave his new Crow acquaintances.

As we followed the chief from the Big Bellies camp up to our own camp, my friend quickly signed to me: ‘To-night, we will not leave here.

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To-morrow, when we go after the horses, we will talk.'

'As you say,' I answered.

Very early the next morning, when the women were building a fire, I saw that Otter Head was awake, so signed to him: 'My friend and I will not wait for Lone Antelope to come in; we will go now after the horses.'

'Yes. Go now,' he answered, and by his queer smile and the look in his eyes, I saw that he knew well enough that Black Elk and I wanted to get off by ourselves, where we could sign-talk unobserved.

We hurried up onto the plain, and there, where none could see us, my friend signed to me: 'That Crow woman and her son whom we met last night, they are of the same clan as my mother; they are also my relatives; they are of good heart. They want us to remain here for several moons, and then, when Otter Head and his women feel sure that we like them so much that we will return, they want us to take them to their Crow relatives. What do you think about it?'

'I should like to do that. I want to know fully these Spotted People and Big Bellies. I

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want to see, to know, the Parted Hairs who are coming. Did your Crow friends tell you about them?’

‘Yes. Also about the white soldiers that they all are going to fight. Very much I want to see that fight.’

‘Our fathers, our mothers are mourning for us; they think that we are dead. I feel that we should soon return to them, make glad their hearts.’

‘Their worst mourning is now over. Great will be their gladness when, in days ahead, we do go to them. Let us remain here one moon, perhaps two moons.’

‘Your Crow friends, here, will they tell the Big Bellies, the Spotted People about this?’

‘No.’

‘I like Otter Head and his women. I like very much Morning Eagle. Yes. Let us remain here for a time,’ I decided.

We rounded up the horses, drove them to the river, had a good bath in it, and hurried to our lodge for our morning meal. As we ate the food that the women set before us, I noticed that the women gave us quick, questioning looks; Otter

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Head also: they were uneasy; fearful that we had decided to leave them.

Signed Good Singer at last to Black Elk: 'That Crow woman, her half-Crow son you met last night, do you like them?'

'Yes, very much. They are of my mother's clan. I want to see them often. How is it — do you think that Fish Robe will let us hunt with him, he so much older than we are?'

'Yes! Yes! He will be glad to go with you!' both women quickly signed, and Otter Head smiled, nodded his head, and hummed a little song as he prepared to fill a pipe.

'These people really love us. Were all of us different plains tribes friendly with one another, how good it would be!' I thought.

As Otter Head was about to light his pipe, we heard distant singing. He laid aside the pipe and signed to us: 'Coming near, a returning Big Bel-lies war party; we will see them.'

We all rushed from the lodge and saw them riding down the west slope of the valley, driving a fine band of horses that they had captured. They came into the bottom between our two camps, still singing their victory song. Twelve

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they were, dressed all of them in beautiful war clothes; four waving enemy scalps stretched in the forks of willow cuttings. Out came from the Big Bellies camp their relatives and friends to greet them, to praise them for their success against the enemy.

Seeing those scalps made Black Elk very uneasy: they might be Crow scalps, and perhaps of his own relatives. He signed to Otter Head: 'You go over there, learn who were the persons that they killed.'

'Not now. Later on, when they have finished eating and all the excitement is ended, we will all go over and hear what they have done,' he replied.

So was it that we sat down there, outside the lodge, and Lance Woman brought out the pipe to us and we smoked, and watched the shouting, singing Big Bellies escort their warriors into camp.

Signed Otter Head: 'None of the women there are crying: the war party has lost none of its number; twelve they were who went, and twelve return.'

Black Elk was so uneasy that he couldn't sit



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still; when the pipe came to him, he took but a quick whiff and passed it on; and Lance Woman and Good Singer, watching him, also became distressed. For his sake, they hoped that the four scalps we had seen were not Crow scalps.

The other camp soon quieted down.

Signed Otter Head, after a time: 'One more smoke, then we will go over there.'

'Now! let us go now!' signed Black Elk.

'No. Two are coming to us,' he answered.

Right he was. They were Morning Eagle and Fish Robe, just entering our camp circle. Black Elk ran and met them, loudly questioned Fish Robe, then turned and signed to us: 'Not Crow scalps! Snake People scalps, Snake People horses, those that the war party brought in!'

At that, Otter Head and his women laughed, clapped hands, and had quick talk with one another. Came the others and sat down with us, and Fish Robe talked with Black Elk in his language, Morning Eagle with Otter Head and me in our languages, first in one and then in the other. So was it that I learned that the Big Bellies war party had discovered a number of Snake People hunters away up at the foot of the

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Real Mountains, just after they had made a killing of buffalo, and, attacking them, had killed four and taken all of their horses. So was I also pleased, for the Snake People were ever enemies of our Blackfeet tribes. And again, not pleased: ever in my mind now was the knowledge of all that the whites were doing to the tribes of this country. Was it not likely, as Otter Head had said, that the whites would soon try to take also our Blackfeet tribes' country? But if all the tribes of the plains and those of the mountains should make one great peace with one another and together turn upon the whites, why, then we all should live on in peace and plenty.

Morning Eagle and Fish Robe had not heard, before coming up to us, all that the returned war party had to tell about their trail to the foot of the Real Mountains: for now came hurrying to us a man of the other camp, and said something to Otter Head that made him and the others cry out with surprise and quickly question him. All sprang to their feet; Otter Head handed his pipe to Lance Woman, and signed to Black Elk and me that we were all to go to the other camp.

'What has happened? Why all the excite-

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ment?' I asked Morning Eagle as we hurried off.

'The just-now-returued ones say that they saw the white buffalo cow,' he answered shortly.

We all went into Morning Eagle's lodge, followed by leading men of both tribes, and two men of the war party were called in and closely questioned. As Morning Eagle afterward told me, they said that they had seen the white cow near the head of Muddy Creek, a stream running into Rosebud River; but, fearing that they were being pursued by men from the main camp of the Snake People, they had not dared to halt in their flight and try to kill it. One of these two warriors had been the leader of the party. Morning Eagle spoke very bitterly to him. What were a few horses compared with the value of the white cow? Nothing! he said. At the risk of their lives, even though half of their number died in the attempt, they should have tried to kill the long-sought-for animal; well they knew that, if the combined tribes could give Sun its white furred hide, they would surely be the victors in the coming battle with the white soldiers. The man replied that it was not alone fear of being overtaken by the Snake People that had caused

## News of the White Cow

them to keep coming without a stop; Crow hunters were in that Rosebud River and Bighorn River country; they had seen many signs of them.

It was likely, said another member of the council, that by this time the Crows had discovered and killed the white one. Well, anyhow, it was now too late to send a party out in quest of the animal: the Parted Hairs were daily expected to arrive to help fight the white soldiers, and for that every gun and every bow was needed.

There followed much argument about that, and at last, after Otter Head and Morning Eagle had whispered together, our captor said to the council: 'Two here present cannot be expected to help us in this fight, for they, their people, have not yet had any of their country taken from them by the whites — their time for that is coming. So is it that I propose we send the two, my now almost-sons, to try to get the hide of the white one for us.'

A man of the Spotted People laughed and said: 'They would go, never to return.'

'Not so!' Otter Head angrily exclaimed. 'I

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know them, they are not liars. If they agree to do this for us, they surely will do it. You, Morning Eagle, and you, Fish Robe, explain to them what we want; ask if they will do it.'

That the two did, and with few words. I felt that I wanted to do it. I looked at Black Elk, he smiled and nodded to me, and I said to Morning Eagle: 'Tell Otter Head and the others here that I will try hard to bring in the hide of the white cow.'

Black Elk made like reply to Fish Robe, and, when our answers had been interpreted, I saw that Otter Head and Morning Eagle were pleased, while some of the others of the council plainly showed that they thought our promises were but lies.

Said Fish Robe to the gathering: 'At least one of us can be spared for this very great undertaking. I am going with the two youths. Should we meet the Crow hunters, I am sure that they would not harm me when they learned from this young Crow that I am half of me of their blood. And should they have killed the white cow, it may be that they will agree to sell its hide to us for some of our horses.'



## News of the White Cow

Now, at last, all the members of the circle were pleased with Otter Head's plan to attempt to get the powerful Sun offering. Quickly, eagerly they gave their approval, and told Fish Robe that, should we meet the Crows and find them in the possession of the hide, he was to offer them many horses for it; if necessary, hundreds of horses.

So ended the council, and we hurried back to Otter Head's lodge, Morning Eagle accompanying us and telling me all that had been said, and that he knew I would do all that I possibly could to obtain the great Sun offering.

Lance Woman and Good Singer became very much worried when they learned what we were to do; they scolded Otter Head, told him that he was doing wrong to send us out on so dangerous an undertaking; yet, while they scolded, they set about preparing for us the things we should need, pouches filled with dried meat, back fat, and big berries, extra moccasins, an awl, and sinew thread. We thought that we were to start off at once, but no.

I have said that, within the big clear circle formed by the lodges of these Spotted People, there were two sacred red-and-black painted

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lodges. In one of them, Morning Eagle told me, lived the keeper of the buffalo cap, and in the other, the keeper of the sacred arrows; both the cap and the arrows had been given to the first Spotted People by the one who created the earth and all the life upon it, and both were very powerful medicine. Otter Head and Morning Eagle now escorted Fish Robe, Black Elk, and me to the westernmost of the two lodges, the one containing the buffalo cap. An old man was its keeper, and it was enclosed in painted leather wrapping and tied to the lodgepoles above his couch. As soon as we were seated and Otter Head had told him the object of our visit, the old man filled a pipe and smoked to the cap, praying it to preserve us three from all danger and give us success in our quest of the white cow. Also, he painted our faces and hands, purified us with scent of burning sweetgrass, and had us smoke the pipe and pray for success.

Upon returning to our lodge, we found that Lone Antelope had brought in the horses and was holding them for us to select the ones that we wanted. I saddled one of my own fast buffalo horses and Black Elk chose one of Otter Head's

## News of the White Cow

swift runners. A boy brought up Fish Robe's horse. We packed an extra horse with our few belongings, I untied Wolf and told him that he was to help us find the white cow, and we got into our saddles and struck out to the west. It was then the middle of the day.

So that our horses might never be too tired for our purpose, we traveled slowly from the time that we left camp, and frequently watered them and let them graze a bit. During the remainder of the day, we saw only three small bands of buffalo. Came night, and we stopped beside a small lake, unsaddled the horses and let them graze, ate some of our dried food, and slept lightly until the middle of the night, when we went on again to the west. Little did we think that trouble was close upon us.

Old Woman, showing all of herself, made the night almost as light as day; and, anyhow, horses can see plainly even in blackest darkness; yet, halfway between midnight and morning, our pack-horse stepped into a prairie-dog hole and his leg broke close below the knee. We dismounted, saw that the animal was done for, and Black Elk shot an arrow into his heart. He fell

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and died. We unpacked him, and took each of us our few belongings that he had carried, Fish Robe saying to Black Elk and signing to me that ours was no great loss; that, should we kill the white one that we sought, we could, anyhow, get home with the hide.

Our horses, grazing, had moved off a little way, and, as we started toward them with our pouches, we heard a real snake rattle his tail, saw Fish Robe's horse flinch back, snorting. We approached the animal, watching our steps, and Black Elk got hold of the dragging rope and made him come up to us. We all then looked carefully at his nose, his legs, but could see no sign that he had been bitten by the snake; so we all mounted and continued on westward. It was not long, however, before Fish Robe's horse became very uneasy, snorting and wanting frequently to stop and rub his nose against his forelegs; and we soon saw that his nose was swelling, and well knew that he would soon become so sick that he would be unable to travel for many days.

Said and signed Black Elk: 'This is very bad. I think it a sign that there is danger for us, somewhere ahead. Let us turn about and go back.'

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‘Yes, let us go back,’ I signed.

Fish Robe looked at his horse’s head, looked back, looked ahead, and, after some thought, said and signed: ‘We will go on. Not far off is the head of Muddy Creek, where the war party saw the white cow.’

So saying, he went on, and Black Elk and I trailed after him. He was our leader, our chief; as he said, so were we obliged to do.

On and on we went; more and more slowly as the snake-bitten horse’s sickness increased. Came daylight, and we saw, not very far ahead, the breaks of a stream that was, Fish Robe told us, the one where the white cow had been seen. During the night we had frightened several herds of buffalo, and now three different herds were in sight, to the south, to the north, and the other not far in our front and heading to the creek to drink. A lone cow that was grazing well in the rear of this herd happened to turn and see us, and, running on, gave the alarm to the others. They also looked back and saw us, and then ran and joined the herd to the south, and the one big herd of them went on south, which was well enough, for we had made sure that the white cow



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was not in any one of the three herds. The herd to the north had been to water and was now running eastward. All this pleased us: any herds that might be down in the valley of the creek remained there unalarmed, and we could have a good chance to approach them in our quest for the white one.

And now, while we were still quite a little way from the creek, the snake-bitten horse gave out; his head had swelled to enormous size; he stopped and groaned and flopped about, and Fish Robe had no little trouble in getting off the saddle. Nor would he be led or driven; so, leaving his saddle, pouch, and ropes there in a clump of sagebrush, Fish Robe got up behind Black Elk on his horse, and we went on. Shrilly the sick one called to his mates, as though asking them not to desert him; they answered and he tried to follow; but his eyes were already swollen shut and he staggered and fell, and was hidden from us by the tall sagebrush. I myself felt very low of heart and terribly uneasy. I wished that I had never started upon this quest of the white cow. I wished that, with my father and mother, I was far in the north in the camp of my own people.

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I was constantly thinking of those two; wondering how they were getting along there in the camp of the Crows; and not a little uneasy; fearful that that mean Low Horn might in some way have done my father harm. Also, I well knew that I was doing great wrong to them by remaining with my captor, from whom I could at any time easily escape. But, oh, how eager I still was to see more of the Spotted People, the South Big Bellies, and above all, witness their coming fight with the white soldiers. Those white ones, because of what their kind might soon be doing to me, to my own people, I wanted to see them wiped out. I cried out a prayer to Sun.

‘What was it that you prayed for?’ Black Elk signed.

‘The Above One, I promised to give him of my body.<sup>1</sup> I asked him to keep my father and mother, and us three here, safe from all danger; to give us all long life and happiness,’ I replied.

‘Good! Your prayer is our prayer,’ they signed.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning that the suppliant would, during the ceremony of the next Sun lodge of his people at which he should be present, undergo torture of his body.

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Soon thereafter, from the edge of the plain, we looked down into the valley of Muddy Creek: nowhere up and down it, so far as we could see, were there any buffalo. Wide the valley was, and down in our front the stream ran through a long grove of cottonwoods. Above the grove and on the west side of the valley was a small and rocky hill with a few pine trees upon it. It was at the foot of the hill, between it and the creek, Fish Robe signed to me, that the war party had seen the herd of buffalo in which was the white cow.

Signed Black Elk to me, as he spoke to Fish Robe: 'Not far from us, maybe out on the plain to the west, is the herd of the white one, if my Crow people have not been hunting here since the war party passed. Let us go down across the valley and learn if they have been here.'

'Yes. And then go above the pine trees hill and see if the Snake People came this far upon the trail of the war party. If we find no signs of Crow hunters or Snake pursuers, then, surely, the white cow is somewhere about here and we shall find her,' signed Fish Robe.

'Good! Lead on,' I answered.

We went slowly down the slope and across the

## News of the White Cow

flat bottom of the valley, looking carefully for tracks of horses. As we neared the timber, I saw tracks in the dry and sandy ground that I thought had been made by horses, and turned back to examine them closely; they proved to be not fresh tracks of buffalo. I turned again to overtake Black Elk and Fish Robe, still riding double, and noticed that Wolf was ahead of them and just entering the timber. Suddenly he turned and came running back, and I felt that he had seen or scented the one thing that he feared, strange men. I was right: out came a number of riders, loudly shouting, men of heavy and short build, and bushy, uncombed, and unbraided hair. Snake men, I knew at once, for often had I heard my father and others so describe them.

‘Look out!’ I cried, and foolishly, for my friends were already fleeing from them, Black Elk quirting their horse, Fish Robe, behind him, pounding the animal with his heels, and powerless to draw his bow and arrows, as he was obliged to hold on to Black Elk’s waist in order to retain his slippery seat. Now, when the Snakes charged out from the timber — but for Wolf we should have ridden right into it — my

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friends were about a hundred steps out from it, and I considerably farther. I saw that the Snakes had bows in hand and that two or three of them carried spears. I saw that one of them, on a big black horse, was gaining upon my friends, coming straight toward me. He shot an arrow at them; another arrow, and that one struck into their horse's left leg, high up. Then, as they neared me, the man prepared to fire again, and I raised my gun to shoot at him. Whoom! my bullet killed him. But I was too late in pulling trigger, for he fired his third arrow while I was taking aim, and it struck fair into Fish Robe's back, and he too slumped backward down onto the ground and died. Then Black Elk and I were riding side by side, and at first far more swiftly than our pursuers. But soon his horse began to limp and slow up, and I saw blood running from the wound in his leg, knew that he must soon give out.

We were then heading for the slope that we had come down, and already far ahead of the Snakes, but we both knew that now they would overtake us before we could go to the top. What hope was there for us to escape them? None, I



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thought. And then, at some little distance up the valley, I saw a cliff, and a break, a coulee, in it in which was a fine stand of trees. Could we get into it we might stand off our enemies. I leaned out and got Black Elk's attention by touching him with the muzzle of my gun. I pointed to the place, signed that we should go there, and we turned our horses straight off to the right, and by so doing lost more of the distance that we had gained; and then the wounded horse went on more and more slowly as the blood drained from his wound. There remained but one thing to be done. I rode close up beside Black Elk and signed him to get up on my horse, behind me.

'Yes!' he signed, and put his bow back into the case slung at his side. He reached over and grasped me and I braced myself against his pull; over he came, quickly, surely, and on we went, urging my horse to his swiftest possible pace; and swift he was, the fastest buffalo horse that I had ever ridden. But the weight of two upon him was too much. I feared that he would give out before we could reach the mouth of the coulee. I pressed the bridle rope into one of Black Elk's

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hands, and then quickly reloaded my gun. The enemy were surely gaining upon us. I feared that our end was near. Black Elk was crying something into my ear, over and over again, as though I could understand his Crow language! I looked back: the nearest one of the enemy was still more than a long bow shot in our rear. I snatched the bridle rope from Black Elk's guiding hand, and urged the horse onward; he was dripping with sweat, and becoming winded. But now we were near the coulee, and when I saw that, under its stand of trees, the growth of brush was tall and very dense, I had some little hope that we might yet save our scalps. At last we came to the lower edge of the coulee, sprang from the horse and ran into it, tore in through the thick brush for quite a little way, stopped under a big cottonwood, and, with weapons ready, awaited whatever might happen. We heard the thudding of horses' feet, and enemy voices out in front, and then all was still.

Black Elk signed to me: 'They will not come in here after us.'

'No. They know that, if they try to get us here, two of them must die before we do.'

## News of the White Cow

We examined our surroundings and had some further talk. This short and narrow coulee that we were in was really a walled setback in the cliff, rising everywhere straight up to the height of the tree-tops: we could leave our refuge in only one direction — the way that we had come in. Night would not aid us to do that, for Old Woman was then shining brightly. It all came to this: if the enemy chose to keep day-and-night watch upon our hiding-place, we must, in a short time, die from want of water or go out and die fighting. And now that I had killed one of their number, it was certain that they would do their best to put an end to us. The day was young, was going to be very hot, and already we were thirsty. Wolf, beside us, was panting heavily and his mouth was white with foam. He got up, left us, heading for the open and the creek, and soon came sneaking back, his hair all on end. Already the enemy had begun their watch upon us, some of them out in front, others, doubtless, up on top of the cliff trying to get sight of us in our hiding-place in the timber and brush. We dared not move from under the big cottonwood lest they fire their arrows down into us. Hai! Hai! Low

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of heart we were, and not only for ourselves: we mourned for Fish Robe, good friend that he was, up there in the valley, dead, scalped, and doubtless cut all in little pieces.

Signed I, at last: 'One chance, just one chance have we to survive this trap that we are in.'

'What is that chance?'

'The coming of some hunters of your Crow tribe.'

Sadly he shook his head and answered: 'That chance is of the size of the end of my little finger. By this time they well know that the Spotted People and the South Big Bellies are in this part of the country.'

## CHAPTER IX

### ESCAPE FROM THE SNAKES

WATER! Before Sun rose to the middle of the blue, we yearned for a drink of it. Came a little west wind that brought to us the far-off gurgling of the creek over its stones, and that made us still more thirsty. And what were our enemies doing? That, we became more and more anxious to know. Some of them were, perhaps, out at the mouth of the coulee, lying low in the edge of the brush and watching for us to come out, while others watched for sight of us from the top of the cliff that hemmed us in on three sides. And again it was possible that the whole party of them were, with the exception of one on watch, resting by the side of the creek; eating, drinking the cool water, vowing that we should die from thirst, if we were not brave enough to come out and die fighting them.

As Sun went on down the blue, I felt more and more that I must know just what the Snakes were doing. 'It may be that they have gone, that they feared to remain here, thinking that



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we were early hunters from the near camp of our people,' I signed to Black Elk.

'When they captured our horses, they also got our pouches of dried food: they know that we came from a camp far off,' he answered; and was right enough in that.

I got upon my feet and Wolf got up and stood beside me, looking toward the mouth of the coulee and sniffing the little wind. I whispered and signed to him to go out, to see if enemies were near. He wagged tail and went forward a few steps, again and again sniffed the wind, and returned to me, and Black Elk signed: 'Now you know. They are out there, are lying at the edge of the brush, watching for us.'

Down I sat again, with my back against the tree, and, without wanting to do so, fell asleep.

Black Elk awoke me; his eyes were red, nearly closed. 'I must sleep a short time. Now, you watch,' he signed.

'The enemy, what of them?' I asked.

'Heard them not,' he answered, and stretched out upon the ground.

I let him sleep until Sun was near setting, then awakened him and signed that, before night, we

## Escape from the Snakes

must know what the enemy were doing; that I was going to climb the tree to try to see them. I got him to brace himself against the tree, and then, by standing upon his shoulders, I managed to get upon one of its lower limbs. He then passed me my gun, and, sticking it under my belt, I slowly went on up until I could see out across the valley. There, near the edge of the timber bordering the creek, horses were grazing, thirteen horses. Another one, dead, swelled, legs stiffly sticking up, lay a little way out from the mouth of the coulee; that, of course, was Black Elk's horse, bled to death. One of the grazing horses was mine, so our enemies were twelve, including the one I had killed. Not one of them was in sight. But as I looked for them, one came out from the creek and out past the horses, and to another, whom I had not discovered, sitting as he was in the sagebrush, and who now arose, and after some talk with the new-comer turned about and went to the creek, out of sight in the timber bordering it. But before he went, while still standing facing me, I plainly saw him sign: 'How is it? Have you seen them?' And then, a little later: 'Watch hard!'

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Where was the one who had answered his signs? I could not see the outer edge of the timber and brush stretching across the mouth of the coulee. Very cautiously I mounted higher, three limbs higher, and then, ha! I discovered a man on top of the cliff to the south of me and a little way back from its edge. He was approaching the edge; he got down upon hands and knees and crept toward it, toward a small bunch of sagebrush that stuck out over the edge. That brush did not belong there; had never grown there upon the bare hard rock; he had himself placed it there to screen his face while he tried to discover us in the timber below. He was not far off; I could plainly see him: his heavy body, powerful arms, big wide face, hair all sticking out like that of a buffalo bull, and a queer kind of a necklace that he wore, with a short heavy bow and two or three arrows in the grip of his right hand, and fur bowcase, with more arrows, dragging at his side. As I watched him approach that cliff edge, anger grew strong within me. 'Killer of my friend, now shall you die!' I hissed, and, resting my gun in the fork of a limb and taking careful aim, pulled trigger. Whoom! Through

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the drifting powder smoke I dimly but surely saw the man spring upon his feet, stand straight up, plucking at his breast, and stagger and fall over backward. I heard a shout: it was the watcher near the horses, calling to his companions in the timber bordering the creek. To him they came running, and, pointing to the cliff, he told them what he had seen. They too stared at the cliff, and talked excitedly. I could hear them.

Black Elk thumped the tree with a stick to get my attention, signing, 'What have you done?'

I had to thrust my gun under my belt before I could reply: 'Killed one, close here on the cliff. The others, ten, are this side of the creek timber, looking our way.'

'Now, what shall we do?'

'I know not. Wait. I will see,' I answered.

Flat upon his back, arms outstretched, lay the man I had killed; as I looked at him, it was all I could do to keep from singing. I was glad, glad! Proud that he lay there dead with my bullet in him. Then, as I looked at his friends, fear was again within me. They still stood in line, there in the open, talking now so quietly that I could not

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hear their voices. Well I knew that now, with two of their number dead, they were more than ever intent to put an end to us. I reloaded my gun.

Again Black Elk thumped the tree, and signed: 'Now, what do the Snakes?'

'Still standing this side of the creek timber, talking,' I replied.

Wolf, too, was looking up at me, uneasily treading the ground with his forefeet, wagging tail, wanting me to come down to him.

Sun had now set. I feared that the enemy would make no move to do whatever they decided upon until it was too dark for me to see them. I watched them until my eyes ached. At last I saw them start toward our hiding-place. On they came, scattering out as they approached the mouth of the coulee, and then, when at about fair bowshot distance from it, they one by one dropped down into the sagebrush and out of sight.

I descended the tree, and Wolf jumped upon me, licking my face with his now almost dry tongue. I saw that Black Elk's lips were dry and cracked, as were mine. I signed to him the posi-



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tion of the enemy, and we decided that they would not attempt to come into the timber in search for us, well knowing that we could hear their approach, and surely kill two of them before they could kill us. No. Instead of attempting that, they were going to keep us hemmed in there in the timber until we died of thirst or made an attempt to break through the line of them.

Signed Black Elk: 'When we can no longer bear our need of water, we will go out, and, fighting, die!'

'Yes,' I answered.

I had made up my mind to that before he mentioned it, and was myself about to propose it. I thought that it was well for us to go out right then, while we still had strength to make a good fight, but something held me back, kept me from proposing it. I signed to Black Elk that it was likely that the watcher out in the open had seen the smoke of my gun when I fired from the top of the tree, and that we should move to some other place. We went to the upper, the north wall of the coulee, and got under a heavily branched tree that was almost against it and about fifty steps back from the outer edge of the

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timber. We there had one advantage: with the wall at our backs, the enemy could come at us only in our front. But, as I have said, we felt sure that they would never attempt to sneak in upon us.

Old Woman was now risen and making the night almost as light as day. Motioning me to keep good watch, Black Elk went to a near young cottonwood, stripped off a large section of its outer bark, and brought many slices of the inner bark, wet and slippery. We chewed them and felt great relief from our thirst. I signed to my friend: 'Something may yet happen to enable us to survive this trap: let us pray for it.'

Pray we did; Black Elk to his Crow gods, I to mine, over and over again, promising faithfully sacrifice of my body. And when I had finished, I somehow felt encouraged; felt that something would occur to enable us to escape the enemies who so closely lay in wait for us.

The Black Coats<sup>1</sup> tell us that the gods to whom we pray never were; that all that we tell about them, their wondrous power, is all lies;

<sup>1</sup> Black Coats (Jesuits). The only missionaries with whom the Blackfeet were acquainted in early days.

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that only their own, their white men's gods, are real. Why, they even say, those Black Coats, that Sun himself is nothing but a ball of fire! Well, they are ignorant. I pity them for their lack of knowledge. Why, in the long-ago, one of our first fathers, Scar Face, went to Sun's far-off island home, an island in a great lake, and there for a time lived with him and his wife, Old Woman, Night Light, and their son, Morning Star; and while there, Sun gave to him the right laws of living, by which our kind have survived all dangers to this day. We do not say to the Black Coats: the white men's gods that you tell of never were. Maybe they really do exist, and for the white men's good. But why, then, should the Black Coats persecute us about our faith in our gods? It is not fair! It is not decent!

See now, what happened in answer to our prayers, there in that walled-in coulee, trapped as we were by our enemies, and nearly dead from want of water, came suddenly, a north wind, cold, and odorous of burning grass of the plains,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A peculiarity of these sudden summer storms from the north is that they are always accompanied by the odor of a prairie fire, when, even up to the farthest limit of the prairies, no grass is burning.

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and then black clouds hid from us Old Woman and all the stars above. Thunder Bird then all but deafened us with the flapping of his wings and nearly blinded us with his arrows of fire. Rain then came with the ever-increasing wind that made the trees shiver and sway and shriek, and Thunder Bird went on south, leaving such black darkness that, though we stood shoulder to shoulder, Black Elk and I could not see each other.

So was it that I had him feel out with his hands the signs that I made. 'Our prayers, Sun heard us. Now, we go, we escape this danger,' I said.

'Yes. Lead out. I follow,' he signed, and took hold of my bowcase hanging at my side.

With my gun in my left hand I started out, feeling my way by frequently touching the cliff with my right hand. Now and then I stumbled against rocks at the foot of it; ran against clumps of brush through which I could not push my way; and all the time the wind blew hard and rain fell heavily. But soon I lost touch with the cliff, brush no longer blocked our course, and I knew that we had passed out of the mouth of the coulee and across the line of our enemies, if still

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they remained there in all that storm. Never could they have discovered our passing unless we had happened to step right against one, squatting there in the knee-high sagebrush.

As I have said, the wind was from the north; it was a south-going summer storm that Sun had brought to our rescue. So was it that I now led northward down the valley for a little way, and then turned short off to the east and up the slope of the valley. And still the rain fell heavily and made glad our hearts, for it washed out our footprints as fast as we made them. I became uneasy about Wolf, and wondered if he still was with us. I called to him; ha! he stuck his dripping nose against my hand!

We were not long climbing the slope of the valley and out upon the plain we went on at faster pace. Cold we were in the driving rain, but no longer thirsty. On and on we went, with the wind ever against our left sides, and thereby keeping our course straight to the east. We were as wet as though we had been swimming a river; we splashed through pools of muddy water. We did not care. Our hearts were glad. I sang a water medicine song of thanks. Black Elk sang



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one of his Crow sacred songs. We kept going; on and on and on across the plain, and, toward morning, in ever-lessening rain. It ceased as came the first light of day, and, as the light grew, we discovered, on our right, a brushy coulee in a long high ridge, and thither hurried to take shelter. Lo! there we found big berry trees still heavy with fruit, and in the bottom of the coulee were pools of rainwater. We ate, we drank. The clouds disappeared, Sun came up. We stripped ourselves of our clothing and spread it upon the brush to dry. We looked out over the plain: buffalo and antelope were here and there in sight; of riders, none. I told Wolf to keep watch for us and we lay down and slept.

Toward the middle of the day the flies walking about upon our bare bodies annoyed us so that we could sleep no longer. We got up, looked out over the plain, rubbed our dry, stiff clothing, put it on, drank, and ate more big berries. And then we talked over our dangerous meeting with the Snakes. We sorrowed over the sudden end of our good friend Fish Robe, but were glad that two Snake lives had paid for his passing to his other world; and decided that our narrow escape was a

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sign that we should not again attempt to find and kill the white buffalo cow.

More good was coming to us: Wolf suddenly sprang up and, with ears set forward, sniffed the wind. We looked out and saw a band of antelope at the top of the ridge and grazing slowly down toward us. I examined the lock of my gun: sure enough, the rain had hardened the powder in the pan. I scraped it out with the point of my knife and primed it afresh. On came the antelope, and, when they were quite near, I took, as I thought, good sight at their buck leader, but only broke his shoulder. But that didn't matter: Wolf ran after him, pulled him down, and killed him for us. So was it that we had meat; but, as we dared not build a fire, we washed the manifold in a pool in the coulee, ate it, and so satisfied our hunger. We were strong to go on when night came.

Two mornings later, just as Sun appeared, we looked down at the two camps in Powder River Valley, and saw that the expected Parted Hairs had not arrived. We descended the slope, heading straight for the camp of the Spotted People and the lodge of our captor.

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A rider from the other camp met us: 'You return,' he signed. 'How was it, your search for the white buffalo? Fish Robe, where is he?'

'Fish Robe is dead; killed by the Snake People. We saw not the white one,' signed Black Elk, and the man turned his horse about and hurried back to his camp to repeat our bad news.

A great crowd of the Spotted People watched our approach, made way for us to pass on to Otter Head's lodge, where, in front of its doorway, he and his women awaited our coming. 'You return! I am glad!' he signed.

With hands to their mouths Lance Woman and Good Singer were taking in our appearance; our ripped moccasins; soiled clothing; uncombed hair; dirty faces. They rushed forward, hugged and kissed us; hung to us as Otter Head signed: 'You saw not the white cow?'

'Saw not,' I replied.

'You return on foot, you met some enemy?'

'Yes, Snakes. They killed Fish Robe, took our horses. He here,' pointing to me, 'two Snakes killed,' signed Black Elk.

Otter Head loudly brought his hands together, smiled, and the two women shouted to the sur-

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rounding crowd the good news of my killing, and loudly they gave praise for it. Came hurrying then, from the camp of the South Big Bellies, Morning Eagle, Fish Robe's mother, and others.

Running up to Black Elk, the Crow woman asked: 'Is it true that my son is dead, that the Snakes killed him?'

'Yes, true. There on Muddy Creek the Snakes killed your son. We could not recover his body,' he replied.

At that, crying dreadfully, the poor woman turned from us and went up the valley slope to mourn for her loved one.

Signed Otter Head then: 'Enough of this, here. Enter now your lodge; rest; eat; and tell us all that we would know.'

We went inside, and, oh, how good it was to sit again upon my own soft couch, with Morning Eagle there at my side to talk with me in my very own language! But first, those two good women set water before Black Elk and me, with which to wash our hands and faces; and then gave us food, good food. And while we ate, the men smoked and talked with one another, patiently waiting to hear our tale. At last I told

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it to Morning Eagle; little by little, he interpreting it to the others. Also, I told it in signs, so that Black Elk would know all that I was saying; and often he interrupted, to put in something that I thoughtlessly left out.

So was it that our truly good friends learned all that we had seen, all that we had done during our absence from the camp. Pity they had for Fish Robe, dead in his young manhood, and glad they were that two of the Snakes had paid for his life. Praise they had for Wolf whose discovery of the enemy in the timber had kept us from riding right into them. They said, too, that Sun surely favored us: in answer to our prayers, he had sent the great rainstorm in which to enable us to escape from the walled coulee. They had me tell again of my climbing of the tree and discovery of the Snake watcher on the cliff. They laughed and clapped hands when I described his appearance; his creeping back toward the brush that he had stuck at the cliff edge, and the way in which he had sprung up and fallen backward when my bullet pierced his body.

At last, in my turn, I questioned Morning



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Eagle, and so learned that the Parted Hairs had sent a messenger to say to the Spotted People chiefs and those of the South Big Bellies that they would join them as soon as possible. They were at present constantly hunting and giving the hides of their kills to the Big River white traders in exchange for more guns, powder, and balls, so that they would be well armed for the coming fight with the soldiers who were building the fort above us.

Now, this did not seem good to me. I said to Morning Eagle: 'But while you await the coming of your Parted Hairs friends, the soldiers will finish building their thick-walls houses, and within them they will be safe from your attack.'

'Our sacred men are constantly praying. Our gods will surely provide some way for us to wipe out these soldiers, these whites, who think that they can take from us the very last part of our buffalo plains,' he answered.

Later in the day, after Black Elk and I had slept and were fully rested, we went about in the Spotted People's camp, and all whom we met gave us pleasant smiles and told us, in the sign language, that they were glad that we had killed

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two Snakes and safely returned. They tried to be friendly with Wolf, to pet him, but he shrank from their outstretched hands. We went on to the camp of the South Big Bellies, I to sit with Morning Eagle, while Black Elk entered Fish Robe's mother's lodge, to tell her fully how he had met his death.

Said Morning Eagle to me: 'I understood you to say that there in that Muddy Creek walled coulee, in your great danger, you vowed that you would give Sun of your body?'

'Yes. But when shall I be able to do it? Haiya! Maybe I shall never again return to my own people, never have the chance to sacrifice myself in the great lodge that, every summer, they build for Sun,' I mourned.

'You can make your sacrifice here. Tomorrow, the Spotted People will begin building their lodge for Sun — we had ours just before we came here — and during the ceremonies I will myself help you to carry out your promise,' he said. And I gladly accepted his offered aid.

So was it that, during the following four days, I witnessed the sacred ceremonies of the Spotted People, and found them very different from

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those of my own tribe. True, they built a big lodge, something like our Sun's lodge, but the ceremonies attending it were very strange: principally concerning a buffalo skull, which they ornamented with paints and little bunches of various plants, and a large wolf skin, which they painted with strange figures in different colors. It represented, Morning Eagle told me, ancient First Wolf, wisest and most powerful of all the animal gods.

On the morning of the last day of the sacred lodge ceremonies, wearing only my breechclout and moccasins, I went into the lodge with Morning Eagle, and he there cut two long parallel gashes through the skin of my left shoulder, two through the skin of my right shoulder, and to the strips of skin between them attached a rope. The other ends of the ropes were then tied to the skull of a buffalo bull, and I went outside the lodge, dragging the skull, calling to Sun that I was giving him of my body, and praying him to give me and all of my people long life and happiness. All that day, by jerks, by short runs, I tried to free myself from the skull, but the skin strips would not break. The pain was dreadful;

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worse and worse as night drew near. The people pitied me; prayed for me; told me to keep up my courage. At last, as Sun was setting, Morning Eagle sat upon the skull, called me to his side, told me to run off as fast as I could go. I did so, and lo! at the sudden tightening of the ropes, both of my shoulder skin strips broke and I fell flat upon the ground, and died. And when I came alive again, there I was upon my own couch in Otter Head's lodge, and Lance Woman, bending over me, was smearing my torn shoulders with marrow grease.

So did I fulfill my vow to the great Traveler-of-the-Blue.

When my sacred wounds healed so that I could again wear a shirt, I joined Black Elk and Lone Antelope in hunting and in herding our horses; and in the times when we had a plentiful supply of meat on hand, I frequently visited Morning Eagle, to talk with him of many things in my own language. Much he told me of far trails of his tribe, to the east and south, trails that they would never again travel because of the ever-increasing advancing whites. And always he would end his tale by saying: 'Lose we

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now this last part of our once almost endless Buffalo country, then will come the end for us, for the Spotted People and the Parted Hairs!’

I very much wanted to see the fort that the white soldiers were building, somewhere above us; from afar, watch them at their work; and more than once asked Morning Eagle to take me there. Always he replied: ‘You shall see those white soldiers and help us fight them, when the Parted Hairs arrive.’

Black Elk and I often talked together about that coming fight, and finally we thus decided: We would see it, but ourselves have no part in it, unless by some chance we should be also attacked by the white soldiers. We made, too, another plan for the future: as soon as the big fight ended, we should return to our own people. Otter Head and his women, Morning Eagle and others of the two camps, were so good, so kind to us that we should not hurt them in any way; upon leaving, we should go with only our very own horses.



## CHAPTER X

### THE WHITE COW ROBE

THE Parted Hair tribes were located somewhere in the Big River country, well below the mouth of Elk River. They now sent messengers frequently, to tell the Spotted People and the South Big Bellies to have patience and await their coming, and to say they were still constantly hunting, in order to obtain more guns and gun food for the coming fight with the soldiers. Days passed; days and days and even moons, and still they did not come; and some of the young men of our two camps, becoming impatient, and disregarding the orders of their chiefs, sneaked off at different times and killed a few of the soldiers whom they surprised at some distance from their fort. Black Elk and I became impatient at this delay in the coming of the Parted Hairs; more than once we made plans to return to our own people, but always decided to remain just a little time longer, in order to see the great fight with the whites. More than once, during this long wait, our two camps moved to fresh hunting country,

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and at last, when winter was really come, we located on Muddy Creek,<sup>1</sup> and not far below the walled coulee in which Black Elk and I had taken refuge from the Snakes.

At this place, on a not very cold day, there came four Parted Hairs, and the news that they brought caused great excitement in our camps: three tribes of them were encamped on Tongue River, and they awaited our coming, to go on and fight the white soldiers. It was late in the day when the messengers arrived, and, after eating, they took their back trail to inform their people that we would join them as soon as possible. Night had come when we set out for Tongue River. We numbered nearly all of the fighting men of our two camps, and many women. Both Lance Woman and Good Singer insisted upon going with Otter Head, to see the fight and do all that they could for our comfort. We traveled all night long, except for one short rest, and it was not until near the middle of the next day that we sighted the great camp of the three Parted Hair tribes. Its size astonished me: a multitude of people were there; as many as were

<sup>1</sup> Now named Lame Deer Creek.

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all the tribes of my people, and yet these were but three tribes of their kind; all of them together, how very many they must be, I thought.

Just as though we were going to fight, we charged down upon the big camp, and then, after friend had met friend, our chiefs ordered us to go a little way down the river and make a camp of our own. Later on, after the chiefs of all the tribes had held a council together and decided upon what was to be done, the Spotted People and the Big Bellies dressed all of them in their war clothes, mounted their horses, and, singing their war songs, rode twice around the camp of the Parted Hairs.

On the following morning, camp was broken and we all moved up Tongue River to the mouth of a small stream putting into it that was named, so Morning Eagle told me, Crows-Standing-Off Creek. So was it that, as we rode along, I saw that which surprised me: for all their hunting, the Parted Hairs had but few guns. Compared with my own people, they were poor, indeed, nine out of ten of them being armed only with bow and arrows. I talked with Morning Eagle about it, and he said the reason was that down whence

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they had come furred animals were not plentiful, and, anyhow, the white traders there had not many guns to sell.

Early the next morning, all of the men put on their war clothes, and a beautiful sight they were, especially the Parted Hairs in their war bonnets that hung down their backs to their very heels, and streamed out behind them as they rode. Leaving the camp, and some of the women to remain in it, we rode up the creek and up its right fork, coming to a halt on a flat prairie at the foot of a steep ridge that was a divide between this tributary of Tongue River and Sweet Pine Creek, running into Powder River. At the other end of this ridge, Morning Eagle told me, in the valley of Sweet Pine Creek, was the soldiers' fort. There on the flat the Parted Hairs formed in line, with the Big Bellies on their right and the Spotted People men on their left. Morning Eagle, however, left his party and came over and joined Otter Head, Black Elk, and me in the line of the Spotted People. Rode out then from the line of the Parted Hairs a man of appearance so strange that I cried out my surprise; for he wore the dress of a woman, his head was bound with a piece of

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black painted leather, and of weapons he had not even a knife. He was, so Morning Eagle told me, the most powerful Sun priest of all the Parted Hair tribes, and, it was said by some, was half man and half woman.

This strangely clothed sacred person rode up onto the ridge and over it out of our sight, but soon came charging back, blowing now and then a wingbone whistle. Halting then in front of our lines, he said to the chiefs — so Morning Eagle told me: ‘I have ten soldiers, five in each hand; do you want them?’

A chief answered him: ‘Look at us, see how many we are. Do you think ten soldiers enough for us? No, they are so few, we do not want them.’

Again the person rode up the ridge, blowing his whistle, signing to Sun to pity him. He was gone a longer time, and came hurrying back and said to the chiefs: ‘I now have ten soldiers in each hand. Will you have them?’

Answered a Parted Hair chief, greatest of all the chiefs there assembled — Black Shield was his name: ‘No, we will not have them; they are not enough for the great number of us here.’



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Off went the queer person again, zigzagging up the ridge, blowing his whistle, calling upon Sun for pity, for help; and when he returned, he shouted to Black Shield: 'In my right hand I have thirty soldiers; in my left hand, twenty. How about it?'

'Not enough for the many of us; we need more than that to pay us for going on and fighting,' Black Shield replied.

A fourth time the Sun priest went up onto the ridge, out of our sight, and was gone a long time. He returned as fast as his horse could carry him, sprang off and slapped the ground with both hands, shouting: 'Now I have more than a hundred soldiers ——' What more he said was lost in the shouts of the great assemblage of warriors there. Now they were satisfied with his offer, and many of them ran and struck the ground about him with their *coup* sticks. I thought then that the chiefs would at once lead on for the attack on the soldiers' fort, but no! After some talk, they led us back to our camp at the mouth of the little creek, and there held a long council with the dressed-like-a-woman Sun priest. They then sent for ten young men, two from each of

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the five tribes, and ordered them to go at once to the far end of the ridge overlooking the soldiers' fort, remain there all night, and in the morning, upon discovering what the soldiers were doing, send back some of their number with reports of it. Morning Eagle was a member of this council, and that night, before we slept, he told me that the plan was in some way to decoy the soldiers out from the fort and then attack them.

The night was very cold, as there was some snow upon the ground and the wind from the north. We were all up before daylight, and while the women prepared the early meal, the men put on their war clothes and saw that their weapons were in good order. We left camp soon after Sun appeared, a large number of the Parted Hairs now on foot, and again went up to the foot of the big ridge. Came to us there two of the young men scouts, and reported that a few of the soldiers, with horses and wagons, were coming toward the other end of the ridge, evidently to get firewood. The chiefs at once ordered a few of the mounted Parted Hairs to go and attack them, hoping that the rest of the soldiers would then come out from the fort, to be in some way ambushed and killed.

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We remained there at the foot of the ridge for a long time, hearing now and then the sound of far-off shooting, and once the whoom! of a big gun in the soldiers' fort. The day was all the time becoming colder, and we feared that we should freeze if we did not soon make a move. At last some of the scouts hurried to us and said that a number of mounted soldiers, and, after them, a number on foot, had left the fort and were approaching the other end of the ridge. At that, the chiefs sent some men to entice the soldiers to come up onto the ridge and along it. A little later, when it was learned that the soldiers were really on the ridge and coming, the Parted Hairs on foot were ordered to hide themselves in the grass on the flat, and the mounted Parted Hairs were told to conceal themselves between two little ridges to the east of the big ridge. The Spotted People and the Big Bellies were sent to hide themselves upon the west side of the ridge. We were there well concealed in a growth of young pines. In this great crowd of the two tribes, Otter Head, Morning Eagle, Black Elk, and I remained close together, with Lance Woman and Good Singer close behind us.

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The presence of the women now worried Otter Head; he told them, two or three times, to leave us, to go back to camp, but they only shook their heads, would not move.

After a long wait, when again near freezing, we saw a Spotted People chief, named Big Nose, coming along the ridge, riding a big black horse, and following him came the mounted soldiers. He turned and charged back at them, pretending that he wanted to prevent them pursuing his fleeing people. They fired many shots at him and he came on again, passed the line of us, the soldiers ever following, first those on horseback, and not far back of them the others who were on foot. I had a good view of them as they passed. In their lead was their chief, in his hand a big knife longer than my arm, and on either side of him a man in the clothes of a beaver trapper. The soldiers were all dressed alike in blue-cloth clothes, and their caps were blue, with shiny leather fronts. They were hairy-faced, fierce-appearing men, and seemed to be eager to press on and make a big killing of the owners of that rich buffalo country. I remembered all that I had been told of their killing of Spotted People

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women and children; knew that, if they could, they would kill the two good women behind me, and I turned all hot inside with hatred of them.

Time and time again Big Nose charged back at the soldiers and I marveled that some of their shots at him did not pierce his body. At last the mounted soldiers, well ahead of those on foot, arrived at the foot of the ridge, started out upon the flat, and the Parted Hairs there hidden in the grass arose and attacked them. At the same time the Parted Hairs east of the ridge, and we upon its west side, charged the soldiers on foot. I fired my gun at one of them; he did not fall. I stuck the gun under my belt and got out my bow and some arrows and fired at others of the soldiers, but whether I myself killed any of them, I was never sure; like a swift-moving cloud were the arrows that were being fired at them. Slow they were in reloading their guns and firing at us, but their aims were true, and many a one of our side went down, to rise no more. Close beside me Otter Head tumbled from his horse, called for help, and Black Elk and I got him up before me on my horse and took him back to his women. There was a hole in his breast; he died as they lowered



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him to the ground. We helped them lash his body upon one of their horses, so that they could take it to some safe place for burial, and then went to fight again. But the fight with those soldiers on foot was ended; all of them were dead, and the victors were stripping them of their guns and other possessions.

The mounted soldiers, when attacked by the Parted Hairs in the flat had retreated to the top of a steep hill a little east of the big ridge. All of the warriors of the five tribes there attacked them and they slowly moved back, from the hill up onto the ridge, where were some very large rocks, and there they made their last stand. One by one they fell; their horses got away from them. They fought well to the very last, killing a number of our party and wounding others, among them that brave Big Nose. He died two days later. We made a count of the killed: they were eighty-one white men, and, of our party, sixty-two. The fight lasted but a short time; it was no more than the middle of the day when it ended.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the so-called Fort Phil Kearny fight, December 21, 1866. Soon after it occurred, all soldiers were withdrawn from this part of the country, which was, by ratified treaty with the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Sioux tribes, Indian country which



I FIRED MY GUN AT ONE OF THEM



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Taking with us our dead for burial, we returned to our camp at the mouth of the little creek. There was much singing of victory songs, as well as wailings of women for their dead. It was thought that the few white soldiers remaining in their fort would abandon it, and not again attempt to take that buffalo country from those who owned it. Well, they did withdraw from it for some winters. But, haiya! There, where once I camped and hunted with the Spotted People and the South Big Bellies, are now fire-wagon trails and many towns of the whites, and of the great herds of buffalo that there we lived upon not even one old bull survives.

On the morning after this big fight, the Spotted People and Big Bellies separated from the Parted Hair tribes, and trailed back to their camps on Muddy Creek. Upon our way there, Morning Eagle told Black Elk and me that, now that Otter Head was dead, Lance Woman and Good Singer would live with their relatives, so we must make his lodge our home.

the Government had agreed not to invade. A good account of the fight, from the point of view of the Cheyennes, is to be found in Dr. George Bird Grinnell's story, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, page 221.

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‘Friend,’ I said to him, ‘we have been too long away from our own people, from our fathers and mothers, who are daily mourning, thinking that we are dead. We feel that we must return to them, make glad their hearts. And now that we have risked our bodies in helping you fight the white soldiers, think you that there will be any objections to our going?’

‘No, you are free to go,’ he answered. And after some thought, he went on: ‘I will tell you now what your good friend Otter Head more than once said to me about you two. He said: “These other-tribes youths, they are good, they are brave. As though they were my very own sons, I love them. But this I know: I cannot always keep them here with me. The time will come when they will feel that they must return to their own people. I shall tell them that they are to go whenever they please, but that, when they do go, I and my women go with them, so that we may be ever near them, our almost-sons.”’

Came back to me then the many times I had seen Otter Head lovingly, sadly looking at us: he had all the time known our hearts. Truly, deeply, I mourned the end of that good man.



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Three days after our return to Muddy Creek, we made known our decision to go to our own people. Mourning as they were over their great loss, Lance Woman and Good Singer felt still worse when we told them that we must go. But they were brave about it; they insisted that we must have, each of us, ten of their horses besides those already given to us. Also, they gave us soft-tanned robes, pouches of dried food, fur moccasins and fur mittens, and pack-saddles on which to load the presents. Then, in the evening, we were called to a feast and smoke with the leading chiefs of the two tribes. They said to us, Morning Eagle and the old Crow woman interpreting, that they were proud of the help that we had given them in fighting the white soldiers. They were sorry that we were going to leave them, and hoped that at some future time we should return. They then handed us two pipes and two pouches of *nahwatoxis*,<sup>1</sup> to be by us given to the chiefs of the Crow and of the Blackfeet tribes, charging us

<sup>1</sup> *Nahwatoxis* is the Blackfeet word for *nicotiana quadrivulvis*, a narcotic plant still cultivated by the Blackfeet, at Gleichen, Alberta, but now used only for ceremonial smoking. It was largely cultivated by all of the Northern Plains tribes until real tobacco became obtainable from the early fur traders.

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to say that they sent them as peace offerings, and hoped that the Crows, the Blackfeet, and the North Big Bellies would soon name a place where the Spotted People and the South Big Bellies could meet them and make a lasting peace, and at the same time agree to fight all attempts of the whites to take from them their buffalo plains.

So was it that, on the following morning, Black Elk and I parted from our good friends, and, with our many horses and other rich presents, struck off down Muddy Creek, and then down Rosebud River, in quest of our people. We found them not on that river, so turned up Elk River, and on the fifth day of our search we saw smoke rising in a bottom of that river, not far below the mouth of Bighorn River. We passed through the timber at the lower end of the bottom, saw that there were two large camps in it, and Black Elk signed to me: 'The Mountain Crows are again with us; that upper camp is theirs.'

That made me think of the Mountain Crow, Low Horn, my father's enemy. What had happened between them during my absence? I wondered. I felt very anxious about it; feared that perhaps my father was dead. But when we

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had gone a little farther up the bottom and farther out from the river, lo! I sighted his buffalo-painted lodge; it was proof that he lived. How glad I was! I began singing a victory song. I had right to do it. Snakes I had killed, and white soldiers had I fought. Black Elk joined in the song, and the people heard us, came hurrying from their lodges, and watched our approach. We entered the camp circle and saw, standing between their two lodges, my father and mother and Dusty Bull and his women. The people made way for us; came crowding after us to learn what we had done. Our mothers pulled us from our horses, crying, laughing, calling over and over our names in praise. Our fathers embraced us. We all went into Dusty Bull's lodge, and Black Elk and I told a little of that we had seen and done during our long absence.

Said Dusty Bull, when we told of the fight with the white soldiers and of the peace pipes that we had in our packs: 'Enough of this now. It is of great importance. I shall call a meeting of chiefs, here in my lodge, to-night, and then you will offer the pipes and tell us all about it.'

Helpful hands had unloaded our horses, cared

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for them, and placed our belongings in our lodges. Queerly smiling, my father lifted the door curtain of our lodge and told me to go in. I entered. Lo! tied to the lodgepoles above his couch, beside the roll of his sacred pipe, there was a neatly folded and bound white buffalo robe!

My father enjoyed my surprise. We sat down, and I asked: 'Did you kill the animal? Was it a cow? Did you find it away off to the south?'

'Yes,' he replied to all three questions. I then told him that the cow had been seen by parties of the Spotted People and the South Big Bellies; that many had hunted for it; that I myself had sought it. And then I asked: 'That Low Horn, what about him?'

'Dead!' he signed, and motioned me to move over, sit beside him. I did so, and he whispered: 'We were successful in our raid against the Assiniboinés. We killed seven of them and captured a number of their horses. When we returned, I learned that some of the Crow hunters had seen a white cow, somewhere at the head of Tongue River. I was grieving about you. I thought that you were dead, and I did not care what became of me. That Low Horn had come

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down from the mountains and was visiting in this camp. I gave out that I was going alone in search of the white cow, knowing that he would take my trail. Wise he was, as cautious as a mountain lion trailing a deer, but before night I got a glimpse of him, following me. I rode into the head of a long coulee and stopped. He thought that I had gone down it, and so came on. When he was close to me, I charged out at him. He turned his horse about and tried to escape, never once attempting to stop me with an arrow. Why, he never drew his bow from his case! All that he did was to urge his horse on at its utmost speed, and, closing in on him, I put an arrow deep in his back! And another one in his horse! And there I left them, gave them to Sun. I went on and on, and after many days discovered the white one on a stream that these Crows call Muddy Creek, and there killed it.'

'On the head of that creek, near a little hill, is where the cow was last seen by the South Big Bellies, by a war party of them. There it was that I killed the two Snakes; we must have missed meeting there by only one or two days,' I said.

'Yes, yes. But Sun prevented, had other plans



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for you: that coming fight with the white soldiers. I am glad that you took part in it,' he answered.

Much more talk we had, and then attended the council of chiefs. There Black Elk and I produced the peace pipes and sacks of *nahwatoxis*, and gave the messages of the Spotted People chiefs and the chiefs of the South Big Bellies.

Said and signed my father, taking up one of the pipes: 'The North Big Bellies are the allies of my people; with the South Big Bellies we have always been friendly. With the Spotted People we have no real quarrel. In behalf of my people, I accept this peace offering.'

Said Dusty Bull to him: 'As your heart tells you, so must you do. We do not blame you that you accept the pipe.'

The other pipe remained upon the ground in front of Black Elk. He urged his father to accept it, telling how very good the senders of it had been to us. Followed much argument about it, and at last the decision was left to Dusty Bull.

Said and signed he: 'With the whites we Crows have no quarrel. Where now are camped the Spotted People, the Big Bellies, and the Parted Hairs is our own country. The buffalo

## The White Cow Robe

that they are killing are Crows' buffalo. They are together, the five tribes of them, more powerful than we are; we cannot drive them out of our country. So long as they remain in it, we shall never make peace with them. My son, break that pipe bowl upon the stones of the fireplace, and burn the pipe stem. Such is our answer to those enemy tribes!'

Reluctantly, Black Elk took up the pipe, laid it back upon the ground, and said to his father: 'I think you are making a great mistake in refusing it. I think that you should make peace with those tribes, and with them be ready to fight the whites. And even though we do that, even though the Blackfeet tribes and the North Big Bellies join in, I warn you that the time is coming when the whites will become so powerful that they may succeed in taking from us, north and south and east and west, all of our buffalo plains.'

'We have never harmed the whites; they will not trouble us. It is well that they are fighting our enemy tribes. Do as I told you; break the pipe,' Dusty Bull all but shouted.

For answer to that, Black Elk wrapped his robe about him and left the lodge, and I followed

## In Enemy Country

close after him. We heard the smash of the pipe upon the fireplace. Our hearts were heavy within us. We went into my father's lodge, lay down upon my couch, and slept.

On the following day, after I had told my father and mother much about the friends I had made during my long absence, I said to him: 'Was the body of that Low Horn never discovered? Are you not suspected of killing him?'

'The body never was found. You know that he was hated by his people. Not long ago, Long Bow, the Mountain Crows' head chief, said to me, "Low Horn is away a long time; maybe he will never return." And then he laughed and gave me a sly look. "No, it is not likely that he will ever come back," I answered, and also laughed. At that, he leaned over and whispered: "He was a bad man! I am glad that you killed him." We then talked of other things.'

I wanted to examine the white cow robe, and my mother got it down and spread it out before me. The fur was beautiful; very thick, of darkish white color. I asked my father what he intended to do with it. He gave a little laugh; looked everywhere but at me; got up and started out of

## The White Cow Robe

the lodge, saying as he went: 'Your mother will tell you about that.'

She laughed too; a loud and happy laugh; and when he had gone, she said: 'This robe is for your grandmother, for her to give to Sun when, in the New Grass moon, we return to our people. She is to have it in payment for that he did to her.'

'Did to my grandmother? Never, never would he harm her!' I cried.

'Men are only children; big of body, full of winters, but still just as mischievous and inquisitive as little children,' she laughingly exclaimed. 'You remember the dress your grandmother made of the cloth that we bought for her, and how your father several times inquired about it? Well, when I told him that she had finished it, embroidered it with elk teeth, he sneaked to her lodge at night, peeked in, and saw it upon her. And then he was so ashamed of himself, of having purposely looked right upon his mother-in-law, that he could not bear to remain in the same camp with her, nor even in the same country. So was it that he made us come with him into this enemy country. Then, when he brought in this

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white cow hide for me to tan, he confessed the wrong that he had done to my mother, asked if I did not think he could wipe it out by giving her the robe?

““And was it just for that that you brought us here at the risk of our lives?” I cried. “Why, you foolish one, you little child! You should have known that my mother is different. She would have been glad had she seen you looking at her in her beautiful dress; she will want no payment for that!”

““We can now go back; she shall, anyhow, have the robe to give to Sun. I am glad that, at last, I have told you about it,” he said.

““Yes. Go without our son: through your childish foolishness, we have lost him!” I replied, and then we both cried.’

‘And now all is well. We are really going to return to our people. I am glad! glad!’ I said.

‘Yes. But your father is terribly ashamed. Say nothing about it; do not laugh at him when he comes in.’

After a time my father returned; he looked not at me as he went to his sitting place, his couch. I told of more of my stay with the Spotted



## The White Cow Robe

People. Many days passed before I talked with him about returning to our own people.

To us three it seemed that winter would never end; but at last it did, and in the Green Grass moon we parted from our good Crow friends, and after many days of travel, found our own tribe of the Blackfeet encamped on Belly River.

And how my grandmother laughed when my mother told her of the cause of my father's taking us into far-off enemy country! 'Tell him,' she said, 'that he must himself give the sacred robe to Sun. Also tell him that I shall soon have a new dress, and I want him to come and see me in it.'

THE END





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## IN ENEMY COUNTRY

*By James Willard Schultz*

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To thousands of young readers, the name of James Willard Schultz stands for the best of Indian stories. For Mr. Schultz is a man who knows how to write and who knows by experience the real life of the Indian village and warpath.

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